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Cuba

Fidel Castro Receives Emigre Conference Participants

FL2604012194 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0000 GMT 26 Apr 94

[Text] At the Palace of the Revolution, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, president of the Councils of State and of Ministers, received participants of The Nation and the Emigre Community Conference, which was held from 22 April to 24 April at the Convention Center in Havana City. Fidel greeted each of the 225 Cubans who, from 30 different countries, attended this meeting. Castro expressed his appreciation for their presence and solidarity with the fatherland; their expressions of support toward Cuba; the preservation of the achievements of the Revolution; and their support of the people in their titanic, ongoing struggle against the U.S. blockade.

Politburo members Carlos Lage, secretary of the Executive Committee and vice president of the Council of State; Roberto Robaina, minister of foreign relations; Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government; Abel Prieto, president of the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists; and Jose Ramon Balaguer were also present at the ceremony.

Emigre on Meeting With Castro

FL2504144094 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1155 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Interview with Miami news correspondent Marcos Castellon by journalist Roberto Cavada and unidentified announcer at the Radio Rebelde studio in Havana on the "Doing Radio" program—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] [Announcer]: You have been listening to that voice, one you are accustomed to hearing on the "Doing Radio" program. For a month or so now, we have been chatting with Marcos Castellon in Florida; but now we have him here, live, in person, a guest at the [emigre] conference and a guest on our program today. Good morning. [passage omitted]

[Cavada] Marcos, I think we could begin—and later go into other things—with last night's big news, which is that Cuban President Fidel Castro received all the participants at a reception. Very briefly, what did you think of the meeting? How was it?

[Castellon] The first thing I have to tell you is that we all attended. I think everyone who was invited to the conference was there last night at the Convention Center [place as heard]. And everything unfolded within the atmosphere that prevailed throughout the conference: a climate of complete normalcy.

We all had the opportunity to say hello to President Fidel Castro. In many cases he recalled details—because there were many people with whom he had had contact in the past, at some other stage in his life. Then he moved into the hall where we were all talking. But a climate of complete normalcy. I mean, in the same tone in which all this has been unfolding. It was very interesting. [passage omitted]

[Cavada] In this connection, Marcos, what do you think—apart from the point that you noted—were other important things about the conference?

[Castellon] I would like to highlight a conclusion that I have drawn, and I hope that many of us who participated in the conference also understood it this way. One thing became clear: First, the very fact of convening the conference, as was pointed out several times, is a demonstration of firmness but is, above all, a demonstration of respect and, I could also say, of humility. The only thing the Cuban authorities have asked of this group of us who have come to Havana, the only thing that has been asked of us is understanding. Nothing more.

[Cavada] People were saying, before the conference took place, that it was going to be a failure. Or rather, not a failure but what the Cuban Government wanted it to be, because it was a meeting among friends—that there would be no divergent opinions. After spending three days yourself, sitting there, listening, and participating, is that the way it was?

[Castellon] Look, aside from the testimony you people, and all the Cuban and international press, have been able to gather through all those interviews, about the diversity of opinion there was among us, I can guarantee that I know personally, and live with, in Miami, many of the people who were there; I know how they think. I know what their ideological and political backgrounds are. Basically, if there is one thing we have in common, it is that there are no fanatics among us...

[Cavada] Yes.

[Castellon] But within that lack of fanaticism, there is extraordinary diversity, an extraordinarily broad gamut of differences in ways of thinking. This has not been a meeting of friends. It cannot be denied that there are friends among the participants; but there are also others who are not such great friends. And others who are frankly not friends at all.

[Announcer] But, as Eusebio Leal was saying, decent people.

[Castellon] Yes, indeed. And everything unfolded in a climate of absolute respect for the differences, on both sides. Because the point is not to accentuate differences but rather to seek out that which unites us, and build on that. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] All right, so you are leaving tomorrow morning. And day after tomorrow, you will be informing us.

[Castellon] Indeed I will. We will continue "Doing Radio" from Miami, and now with even greater reason, for you people here in Havana. [passage omitted]

Emigres Say Castro's Health 'Normal'

PA2504125894 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0617 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] Havana, 25 Apr (EFE)—Cuban exiles who last night attended the reception given by Fidel Castro for the participants in "The Nation and the Emigrants" conference, said that his health seemed perfectly normal, although some indicated that it is not in vain that years pass.

At the conclusion of the conference, Castro met with all the guests at the Palace of the Revolution. He did not participate in any of the three days of meetings between the Cuban Government and 225 representatives of the moderate exile community. The conference closed last night.

Officials of the Batista government, former combatants of the thwarted Bay of Pigs invasion (1961), fierce anti-Castro activists of other eras, and people with less active backgrounds filed by the Cuban leader, who greeted them one by one.

"The rumor that he was seriously ill is a lie because it would have been impossible for him to be on his feet for more than one hour greeting everyone," Lazaro Farinas told EFE. Farinas was a member of an armed group that in the early years of the 1960's struggled against the revolution. "It is true he is an elderly person, he carries his age, but I found him alert and receptive. I do not know whether he is ill, but I saw him calm and relaxed, very normal," Farinas added.

Juan Manuel Rodriguez, a former captain of the revolutionary army who left Cuba in 1960 and today is a prosperous businessman in Costa Rica, said that "if someone says he is dead, I have spoken with a dead man, and in addition, he asked me about financial moves that might help the country."

Castro embraced Luis Ortega, a journalist who left Cuba 41 years ago, and then confessed to him that he had a little flu.

Juan Manuel Martinez, who was spokesman of the Batista government and fled the island on 1 January 1959, the day of victory for the Revolution, was surprised by "Fidel's great memory." Martinez said Castro recognized him immediately, that he had faithfully followed the development of the conference, and that they both agreed that "they must jointly travel a long stretch until the goal is reached."

Max Lesnik, one of the founders of the Cuban Change [Cambio Cubano] organization led by former revolutionary combatant and former political prisoner Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, said that "for his years, it did not seem to me he had negative symptoms." Lesnik also said that with this reception all the guests—not a single one was absent—*Fidel "endorsed the results of the conference."*

Those results were the formal promise that these contacts will continue—although there is as of yet no date for the next meeting—and the possibility that most of the Cubans residing abroad will be able to return whenever they want.

They were also encouraged to invest in the country under the same conditions as other foreign businessmen, in other words, in partnership with Cuban state capital, something that, for the time being, rules out small businesses for them or their relatives. This was apparently an objective of a good number of the participants at the meeting.

Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina also said that a department will be created in the Foreign Ministry to deal with the emigrants' problems and he indicated that the Cuban Government has communicated to the U.S. Government its desire to open a consulate in Miami.

Group Forces Way Into Canadian Embassy

PA2504211894 Paris AFP in Spanish 2021 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] Havana, 25 Apr (AFP)—A group of Cubans, comprising three or four adults and a child, entered the Canadian Embassy in Havana by force this morning and requested asylum, it was learned from a diplomatic source.

Defying security guards, the Cubans forced their way into the embassy, located in the residential neighborhood of Miramar (west of Havana) at approximately 0900 (1300 GMT). One of the Cubans who tried to enter, however, was barred entry, according to the same source.

A U.S. television crew from Miami, which arrived in Havana to cover The Nation and the Emigrants Conference, which for three days brought together representatives of the Cuban Government and Cubans living overseas, was in front of the embassy and filmed the incident, the same source reported.

In recent months, several Cubans have attempted on various occasions to enter the embassy garden, which is protected by a large gate and guarded around the clock by several policemen.

The last time something like this happened was in late January, when eight Cubans sought asylum at the residence of the Belgian ambassador in Havana. In view of the Cuban authorities' refusal to allow them to exit the country, they did not leave the residence until one month later, on 24 February, after obtaining the government's promise that they would not be prosecuted.

Group Leaves Canadian Embassy

PA2604024494 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 0139 GMT 26 Apr 94

[Text] Havana, 25 Apr (NOTIMEX)—Four Cuban adults and a three-and-one-half-year-old who entered the Canadian Embassy in Cuba today to request asylum,

have left the building on their own accord after occupying it for eight hours, according to embassy sources.

"We told them there was no possibility of their being granted political asylum under Canada's international policy," David Morrison, secretary of the diplomatic mission, stated today. He said the five entered the Canadian Embassy, which is located in the Miramar residential neighborhood of Havana, at 1000 (1400 GMT) in a peaceful manner and left at 1810 (2210 GMT).

"After thinking it over," the occupants left the building on their own and without incident," the diplomat said. Morrison said those who requested asylum said they were doing so because "life is very difficult" in Cuba.

Morrison said he personally spoke to the occupants, one of whom was the father of the minor, who entered the Canadian Embassy by taking advantage of a change of personnel. NOTIMEX was able to confirm that the situation in and around the embassy building is normal tonight.

Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina told newsmen this afternoon that "these issues are connected to the extremely difficult period the country is enduring and that in difficult times some people begin to make rash decisions."

Cuba opposes all attempts to leave illegally, even by those "who resort to requesting political asylum, which is the best way to get some other country to receive them," the Cuban foreign minister noted. Robaina said this phenomenon is encouraged "from abroad," and he noted that "situations of this type will continue to occur."

He added, "I believe the news in this country is no longer that 10 people defected or 50 people defected: the news continues to be the millions who are resisting."

Seven Cubans entered the Belgian Embassy last February demanding permission to leave Cuba, but they left the embassy on their accord a month later, after receiving confirmation that the Cuban Government refused to grant them permission to leave.

Zambian President Plans Visit in 'Near Future'

FL2504120294 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0000 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Excerpt] In the near future, Frederick Chiluba, president of the Republic of Zambia, will travel to Cuba at the invitation of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, president of the Councils of the State and Ministers. The Zambian leader's visit is of an official and friendly nature and will contribute to reinforcing the traditional friendly ties between Cuba and Zambia. [passage omitted]

Arrives for Official Visit

FL2504235294 Havana Cuba Vision Network in Spanish 2220 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] This afternoon, Frederick Chiluba, president of the Republic of Zambia, arrived in Cuba to carry out an official friendly visit which corresponds to an invitation from Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, president of the Councils of State and Ministers. This visit is in line with the traditional ties of friendship and cooperation between the Cuban and Zambian people.

Meets Fidel Castro at Airport

FL2604002994 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 25 Apr 94

[By Julio Gomes Yosia from Jose Marti International Airport]

[Excerpts] Aboard DC-10 Flight 741, following a stopover in Madrid, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba has just arrived in Cuba for an official, friendly visit at the invitation of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro who at this moment is walking toward the plane to meet the illustrious visitor and his retinue. [passage omitted]

The Zambian president at this moment is being greeted by our commander in chief and by other Politburo members. This is an exclusive direct report from Jose Marti International Airport on the arrival of Zambian President Frederick Chiluba on Flight 741 aboard a DC-10 plane. [passage omitted]

[Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks broadcast in Spanish at 0000 GMT on 26 April shows Cuban President Fidel Castro walking toward Zambian President Frederick Chiluba as the latter disembarks from his plane. Castro is seen embracing the African leader. They then slowly walk side by side from the plane.]

Health Minister, Peruvian Counterpart Sign Accord

FL2304150094 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0900 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] A protocol of intent in the sphere of health has been signed in this capital by the public health ministers of Cuba and Peru, Julio Teja and Jaime Freundt-Thurne, respectively. The document points out existing possibilities for economic, scientific-technical, and commercial cooperation, and the ways in which these possibilities can continue to be developed in primary healthcare, preparation and training of human resources, and the marketing of specific generic medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment.

Institutions such as the Finlay Institute, the (Hebert Biotech) firm, and the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center turned in a proposal for the acquisition of the meningitis-B/C vaccine and the hepatitis-B vaccine, respectively. [sentence as heard]

Poll Shows 65 Percent of Public Optimistic

FL2504204194

[Editorial Report] Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish at 1600 GMT on 25 April carries its "Straight Talk" program with host Osvaldo Rodriguez and his guest, reporter Luis Sexto of BOHEMIA magazine.

The topic of the discussion is: What country do we live in today? Rodriguez and Sexto point out that Cuba is overcoming the economic crisis. Although there are pessimists who believe that all is lost, Sexto points out that Cuba is poised on the runway, ready for takeoff.

Rodriguez focuses on two words used by Sexto in his arguments: ignorance and pessimism. Rodriguez says that those who cannot see the progress are more ignorant than pessimistic. He believes that many people will have to see progress in their own homes before they can believe.

Sexto points out that Cuba has developed its infrastructure during the past 30 years. He says: "Nowadays there is a trend toward denying all that has been accomplished in Cuba during the past 30 years. In other words, we are in these circumstances and what we did in the past is no longer good. Of course, they do not realize that external factors are greatly influencing the internal reality of Cuba."

Sexto goes on to say that there are many signs of recovery: "Every time a factory goes into operation, Cuba advances a millimeter down the runway for its takeoff. A few months back, we put the cardboard factory in Santa Cruz del Norte into operation. That is good news. We believe the current sugar harvest will be a bit better than the past harvest. If we produce 1,000 tons more, than we will have grown another millimeter in our situation. We will have produced more than last year."

Rodriguez points out that there have been other achievements: "Now that you are talking about accomplishments, I should remind you that in the first quarter 305,000 tons of oil were extracted from Cuban soil. This represents a 12-percent growth in relation to the goal for that quarter. It also represents an increase in comparison to last year."

Regarding this, Sexto replies: "That is a record high figure. In other words, during the month of January, oil workers worked very hard. There are some who say that no one works in this country. Nevertheless, the oil workers have rejected that superficial and incomplete vision that is circulating."

With regard to the tobacco, pharmaceuticals, and oil industries, Sexto points out: "In the past, the tobacco crops suffered some deterioration. I believe there has been a recovery in this area. This year we have had a good harvest.

"I also understand that the income from biotechnological and biopharmaceutical products is increasing. We also know that our nickel is selling well. It is even being marketed, if I am not mistaken, in more than 20 countries and its price has increased.

"As you mentioned just seconds ago, oil extraction has increased. The possibility of finding better oil and in greater quantities may not be an off-the-wall possibility. It may be a very serious possibility. Some people have said that those are real possibilities. In other words, we have foreign companies which have invested a large sum of money in this country and I believe that no one invests money blindly and foolishly. I believe there must be a certainty, a certain guarantee that what is being invested will not be lost."

Regarding the economy and public opinion, Sexto says: "There is a poll that indicates that 65 percent of the those questioned believe that with the gradual application of measures that will be adopted in the next few months, our economy will benefit."

Rodriguez remarks: "That same survey points out that only 1.4 percent of those questioned believe that there is no need for measures."

Sexto concludes by saying: "That 65 percent believes that the economic measures that will be adopted in the next few months will gradually help improve the country indicates that there is a tendency toward optimism. Workers truly trust in the strategy that our country has followed to overcome this difficult situation." "Straight Talk" ends at 1615 GMT.

Cienfuegos Generator Breakdown Causes New Outages

FL2204235894 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1930 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Text] This morning, Unit No. 4 of the Carlos Manuel de Cespedes power plant in Cienfuegos, with a generating capacity of 158 megawatts, had to be taken offline due to a rupture in one of the unit's boiler pipes. This situation will cause greater outage problems than those that took place over the past weekend.

Jorge Carballo of the Electric Union pointed out that this unit should be repaired within the next 72 hours. He added that workers are now waiting for the boiler to cool down to begin repairs. When this unit goes back into service, units No. 1 of Santa Cruz del Norte and No. 6 of Diez de Octubre will be taken offline for maintenance.

Outages To Spread

FL2304142494 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1000 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] Power outages could spread today in different parts of Cuba as the result of a breakdown that occurred at the Carlos Manuel de Cespedes thermoelectric power plant in Cienfuegos. The breakdown occurred in a line at

that plant, and there is intense work going on with a view to solving the problem as quickly as possible, according to the Electric Union.

Cienfuegos Mills Increase Electric Self-Sufficiency

FL2304164994 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Text] Cienfuegos Province sugar mills have attained, during the current phase [of the harvest], 83.2 percent of the plan for self-sufficiency in electrical energy. This is some 2.6 percent more than in the same period in 1993. Scheduled repairs to the sugar installations are designed to restore the areas that generate steam and to relocate four turbogenerators to provide an emergency reserve of 3.6 megawatts.

Sugar Industry Needs Electric Self-Sufficiency

FL2304011494 Havana Cuba Vision Network in Spanish 2220 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Text] Electric power self-sufficiency in the sugar-growing sector is of vital importance to the national economy. Sancti Spiritus Province is among the best in the nation in self-sufficiency. The goal of ceasing to be a burden to the national electric power system is being consolidated in Sancti Spiritus Province, when we consider that they already generate 90 percent of the electricity they need. The huge Uruguay [sugar mill] in Jatibonico is outstanding in this accomplishment, which produces 108 percent of its electricity. The (?FNTA) and Ramon Ponciano mills are also self-sufficient. However, the potentialities could be even greater if capabilities were used to greater advantage—these potential capabilities are a fundamental factor—and if exploitation of the installed turbogenerators was to be improved.

The national average is 20 kilowatt-hours per ton of cane ground, while Sancti Spiritus' nine mills surpass 22. Other elements for self-sufficiency in energy are to be found in the search for alternative measures, such as at the Ramon Ponciano Agroindustrial Complex, where the cane chaff grinder is yielding very good results. This chaff makes decent levels of combustion possible.

This has been a report by Rafael Daniel from Sancti Spiritus.

Basic Industry Minister on Power Outages

FL2204202094 Havana Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 0030 GMT 16 Apr 94

[Interview with Marcos Portal, minister of basic industry, by reporters Hector Rodriguez, Osvaldo Rodriguez, Maribel Acosta, and Susana Lee on the "This Very Day" program—live]

[Text] [Hector Rodriguez] Today on our program, we have Basic Industry Minister Marcos Portal, who kindly agreed to join us on the "This Very Day" program, to whom we say: Good evening.

[Portal] Good evening.

[Rodriguez] After the first question, which I will be asking, these other reporters will ask questions: Osvaldo Rodriguez, from JUVENTUD REBELDE and who covers the basic industry sector; Maribel Acosta, from NTV; and Susana Lee, from GRANMA newspaper.

As everyone knows, Minister Portal's presence responds to the problem of electrical power generation. I would like to ask Minister Portal about the current situation with the generation of electricity.

[Portal] I believe I should start by saying that we are going to explain the situation with Cuba's electric system objectively and clearly. We must point out that this is the greatest, or one of the greatest problems that Cuba currently has. In other words, it is this situation that we are going to explain.

There are solution to our problems, but there are no miracles. I wanted to make that clear. The solution not only involves the workers and engineers of the electric industry; it involves general population. I believe it would be prudent to give our explanation to the population based on this fact. We appreciate the opportunity to bring this to the people directly.

Having said this, we can begin our discussion. I am going to use some graphs. The first point we wanted to explain is the composition and origin of electric generation in Cuba. I believe this is important for two reasons. Our system has 3,132 megawatts. Of the generation of those 3,132 megawatts, 66 percent is by equipment from the former Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia; 34 percent of that generation is by equipment obtained from capitalist countries.

There are two things that I would like to point out, the first being that 86 percent of all the machinery and plants that we have were built after the triumph of the Revolution. Approximately 80 percent of today's installed capacity was built in the last 25 years or less.

[Rodriguez] That is 80 percent.

[Portal] Right. In other words, only about 14 percent was inherited from the capitalist period. This is very important. I believe this gives us a sense of security. The national electric system is relatively young, strong, and powerful in its generating capacity and in the network of the national electric system. We believe that this gives us a sense of sureness of overcoming the special period. This is an area where I know there have been doubts and concern. The facts give us this practical information.

The second point I want to make is that 66 percent of the electric generation is by equipment obtained from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. These two countries have ceased to exist. I want to point out that in addition to the material guarantees that came from those countries, favorable financial conditions, obtaining spare parts and machinery, etc., there is a certain technological

dependency. It is not a true dependency but a technological dependency. The turbines, generators, boilers, pumps, etc. were obtained from those countries. This was interrupted in the last three years and we have had to face this situation boldly, supported, as can be expected, by the technical force that we have.

From the very beginning of the Revolution our industry has been blessed in that sense. We have always had highly qualified technicians, engineers, and workers. There are things that we....[changes thought] This is the second time that our workers have had to take care of our old capitalist plants and solve millions of problems. This is the second time we face this situation, but under different conditions. This time we are facing them with a greater infrastructure.

That is the reason I wanted to point this out. We can overcome that technological dependency. We can do this in two ways: There can be relations with the countries that inherited the companies and factories that supplied this equipment, and we can obtain materials and resources from other countries to keep them in operation.

Undoubtedly, three years of interrupted supplies, spare parts, and resources is a reality. Speaking from an objective point of view, this is what has been happening. This is 66 percent of the generation, not including the networks. These are the two elements that I wanted to point out in this information.

I also want to mention another subject we would like to discuss, right at the beginning. It has to do with the nation's heavy crude oil. This does not mean it is the only crude oil the country has, or will have in the future. This is what we have today, and its production can be increased.

The importance of national crude oil in generating electricity cannot be underestimated, especially over the past three years: 1992, 1993, and this year, 1994. The nation's crude oil had to be used in an immediate or urgent manner as a source of generating electricity for the country. The country must be aware of this. In 1989, as is well known, we imported 13 million tons of oil. This import was reduced almost abruptly. In 1990, we imported 10.4 million tons, almost three million tons less. In 1991, we imported 8.6 million tons; and in 1992, we imported only 6 million tons. This has been thoroughly explained by several comrades several times. We must understand the country's situation, with that fuel cut in half in two or three years.

This is the first reason for using national crude oil in the thermoelectric plants. That is, this was not a superficial or easy decision. It was a daring and well-considered decision. The national crude oil, which has a percentage of brimstone—probably 6 percent or a little more—because of its viscosity, requires a tremendous effort to extract, handle, and transport in ships or on Transport Ministry trains, etc., especially for its consumption in thermoelectric plants. This implies a tremendous effort and decision by the Revolution, a decision adopted by us the technicians, the engineers. We made the decision to use the national crude oil at a time when we were practically hopeless, unable to generate electricity the country needed.

The country was able to show this last year, namely in July and August. The country generated practically 70 percent of its overall electricity at that time with the national crude oil. That is, two or three thermoelectric plants could face the deficit situation and continue generating electricity. This year, 30 percent of the electricity is generated with national crude oil. We hope to maintain this. It is an important amount—835,000 tons. We can say that if we were to import the fuel oil, it would take approximately $60 million, considering fuel oil's current prices. This decision has provided utilities amounting to approximately $30 million, or a gross $35 million. Today this money does not exist. We do not have it, considering the country's financial situation, et cetera. So, we feel that this is the main cause.

To further explain this phenomenon, we must add that the thermoelectric plants are not being destroyed by the national crude oil; that is, the turbines—generators of the thermoelectric plants—fuel-pumping systems, cooling and automatic systems, which are important parts amounting to 70 percent of thermoelectric plants, are not being destroyed by this crude oil.

The gas pipelines of a thermoelectric plant suffer when the petroleum is burned. When combustion takes place, the gas goes through the gas piping system and the corrosion level increases. We know this is so, but measures are being adopted to solve this problem. The shop being built to enamel the surface through which the gas passes will be finished this month. This will ensure that the metal will have the same lifespan as before, or perhaps longer. We will probably use additives to reduce corrosion. There is a way of fighting corrosion and of assimilating a product. If the country today has this product, and if today we use 30 percent, perhaps we could achieve 40, 50, or 60 percent within 15 or 20 years, generating our own electricity with national fuel. This is very important. We cannot make any real projections because we do not know the country's capacity, considering the difficulties it has to confront, such as the blockade and current harrassment. It is important to generate part of our electricity by using our own fuel, a national fuel. And this fuel is much better than coal.

The national crude oil has twice the burning capacity of a ton of coal. That is, a ton of crude oil is equivalent to two tons of coal. The same thing happened in the United States and in Europe when they experienced a situation similar to ours—for different reasons—during the early 1970's, when they were forced to adapt their thermoelectric plants to consume coal in a relatively short period of time—a year and a half, two years, three years—after the coal supplies had been severed some 20 years earlier. We

did not need to do this. We had a guaranteed supply of fuel, although we think this decision was necessary and inevitable.

Not all our thermoelectric plants are burning national crude oil. This should be clearly explained to the people. Of our overall capacity, of our 3,123 megawatts, only 40 percent of the plants are burning national crude oil. The Rente and the Mariel thermoelectric plants are essentially burning crude oil, and a total of 1,000 megawatts are produced between the two. There is another plant in Santa Cruz del Norte that has one unit operating, while a second is being repaired. A third unit is sitting right on top of a petroleum deposit. This unit represents a tremendous savings for the country. That is, part of that petroleum is consumed right there. It is a tremendous economic factor.

Now, if you add up the numbers, you will say: But how is it possible that if national petroleum can be a savings factor for the country, no money, resources, or currency have yet been obtained to invest in this area? Besides, we are not talking about tens of millions of dollars—which during another time might have been a small amount—but a small amount to offset this situation and to keep up the maintenance work. Well, these resources simply do not exist. This problem was discussed last year at the National Assembly [of the People's Government] [ANPP]. It was very well outlined by one deputy who is a director of one of our thermoelectric plants, and who discussed the financial situation very thoroughly. He correctly reported that some $18 million was necessary to try to face the maintenance work. I had the responsibility of explaining to this comrade that this year, we do not have a cent for that purpose. We have difficulties with medicines and with food, and that we must try to resist for at least another year before talking about thermoelectric plants. Then, by the end of the year, we managed to collect some $2 million from the income the country is beginning to receive. You know the country is receiving some income in dollars from certain activities. Well, this was possible and allowed us to repair the thermoelectric plant unit in Matanzas, and one unit in Cienfuegos. We are beginning to reverse the situation, to increase the available installed capacity. We managed to reach 36 percent when the Matanzas plant stopped operating by the end of the year, and things have been recovering gradually. I will try to explain the solutions we found this year; that is, I will explain the measures we are adopting and the possible solutions.

Well, Hector, I only wanted to make things clear concerning the national crude oil. This phenomenon is imposed on national life, but we are satisfied, we are happy. That is, we cannot just take the negative side of the issue. Of course there are people who want to see things negatively. Well, they might do so, especially the people abroad who want to see our country completely destroyed. But we are not going to allow this.

We are producing electricity with a fuel we did not dream of some 20 years ago, or even 10 years ago. For five years, we have been using it to generate electricity, to generate 30 percent of the electricity we are consuming. So how can we Cubans be misled by this? This problem is going to be solved. We are going to assimilate it as it was assimilated in other countries by using coal, which is even more difficult. Imagine using coal as fuel for our thermoelectric plants. Imagine the dirt, the handling of it, the ashes, the tragedy that coal would cause. Crude oil can be assimilated much more easily. We have assimilated it with very little investment, namely for the purchase of pumps, etc., given the viscosity of the crude oil. When the time comes, these plants will require maintenance. Well, this is a subject that had to be discussed....

[Rodriguez, interrupting] Yes, this is a subject that is discussed continuously.

[Portal] I think this talk was necessary, given the prevailing confusion and the people's concern over this problem. Some people say that we are destroying the thermoelectric plants, etc. As I have just explained, some of these plants are almost 20 years old, and we are taking good care of them. That is, we cannot allow something that is good for the country to be damaged. This is the manner in which we are working. But this does not include all thermoelectric plants. Part of these plants have nothing to do with this.

Now I would like to discuss the practical side of the national power system [SEN]. I want to refer specifically to 1989. I think it is important to go back to that year, when we managed to obtain 77.7 percent of the available capacity of the entire electricity generation system, as well as 23.3 percent, which was kept for maintenance, breakdowns, and limitations. We must explain that electricity is generated all 365 days of the year, and around the clock. It is obvious that part of that capacity will be under repair or maintenance, and this requires discipline. The SEN has been conceived this way. There is an established discipline concerning the thermoelectric plants for shutdowns and maintenance. A shutdown can be short or long, depending on the needs. There are some units manufactured in the 1960's, namely those manufactured by the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. These plants will require 90 or 120 days to be repaired. The ones we have in Cienfuegos, which were made by the Japanese Hitachi Company require 60 or 70 days, depending on the work that must be done. The unit in Matanzas, for instance, required only 27 days. Well, some time was saved there. In short, part of the plants will need time for maintenance.

This is what we mean by 77.7 percent of available capacity, and 23.3 of maintenance. This percentage was comparable to the most developed countries in the world in 1989. For instance, the Yankees have 80 percent, while we have 77.7 percent of the available capacity. And this has been consolidated. We have achieved this thanks to our workers and technicians. They have consolidated this percentage.

The breakdown percentage at this moment has reached 50 percent. That is, breakdowns, maintenance, failures, and limitations amount to a total of 50 percent. The idea of limitation of a thermoelectric plant has to do with the ashes, the dregs, the dirtiness, et cetera, which reduce the potential capacity. That is, from 100 megawatts it drops to 95 megawatts. We keep it that way, because to clean a plant, it must be paralyzed. Moreover, a small breakdown or a leak still allows operation for some days, but its generating capacity necessarily drops. This is called limitation.

We must also refer to the breakdowns in the system, such as the breakdown of a boiler pipeline, a steam pipe, et cetera. This will demand a shutdown because to repair this damage, the plant must be cooled down. Now, why has this generation capacity been aggravated? This is the key issue. There are four essential causes:

The first cause is the suspension of the supply of spare parts by those two countries I mentioned before. This supply stopped three years ago. This is an important cause. And it is the truth. We have managed to survive with our reserves. We did have some extra spare parts in our stores, in the steel industry, and in other investments. That is, this is a problem, and without any drop in generation, we kept these plants operating until the middle of last year. That is, we managed to resist in 1990, 1991, 1992, and half of last year. And besides, in addition to these problems we were also short of fuel. But this year we have this fuel, and so the difficulties are being overcome.

Despite the blackouts, our people have achieved a discipline that is unique. It is unique because the people have fulfilled the family home plan. At least 90 percent of Cuban families managed to save electricity. A large percentage has fulfilled the plan, while a small percentage, perhaps 8 or 9 percent, failed to fulfill this plan, not saving energy. More than 90 percent did fulfill it. This is unprecedented. Not even the Yankees achieved this when they ran out of fuel. During the Carter administration, when they ran out of fuel, a set of measures were adopted, such as teaching the women to boil water, et cetera. That is, they adopted very serious and drastic measures at that time. But with the electricity problem here, we have surpassed them with the set of measures we adopted. We are sorry that such measures had to be adopted, but to return to our point, this phenomenen was the first cause. And we have overcome this. And people ask: well, why has this solution been found only now? No, this is not a recent solution. The use of the national oil was not adopted overnight, and the manner in which the country had to face the shortage of spare parts and materials did not emerge overnight either. Nothing has been improvised. Everything has been done calmly, with intelligence and serenity. We had to postpone the maintenance of some plants in order to meet some demands. This is the second cause.

That is, the maintenance timetable was the second cause. A thermoelectric plant, such as that of Matanzas, needed to be repaired. And this plant had to keep operating for a year or six months without maintenance, while the spare parts were prepared. The parts were taken to the shops to be repaired. This demands discipline, and this discipline is broken when there are no spare parts or the necessary material.

The third cause, which to my opinion is the most important, has to do with the country's difficult financial situation. We are aware of the sugar industry situation, that is, the sugar deficit. We are aware of the nickel industry which is also experiencing a drop in prices, and a drop in the production capacity of our nickel industry. It has abruptly lost its market. The socialist countries used to buy 70 percent of our nickel, but in 1992 these countries did not purchase any nickel at all. They purchased no nickel whatsoever in 1992.

[Rodriguez] And was there a need to look for new markets?

[Portal] Yes. Today we are selling nickel to 96 countries. We must not take this as a setback because depending on a single country for the sale of our products was beneficial, correct, et cetera. But today our comrades from foreign trade have managed to reach other markets. Today, our nickel has a market, while prices are increasing.

Now we need to recover our plants. We are looking for financial support to recover these plants. When you lose a market and lose your client, you stop having an income. And when you stop having an income, if no one grants you a loan—and today no one is granting loans to the country—the international bank does not grant loans, the World Bank does not grant loans, no one is granting loans to the country—this is one of the few countries in the world to which no one is granting loans.

But this does not mean that we are begging for money. We have a sugar harvest and we have nickel. But I am not going to refer to the nickel issue because we have already solved that. What we were unable to solve in the two previous years is being solved by those who invest in and trust the country, the Revolution, and our people. We are already receiving capital for the nickel to solve this problem. Guaranteed by what? By the nickel our workers are going to produce. That is not the objective of the [word indistinct].

The third cause: the lack of hard currency and financing. This is solved only by producing, and by intelligently seeking sources for financing and markets for our product. That is the third cause that I wished to explain.

There is a fourth cause, which is the domestic crude. It is true that in the boilers, the increase in maintenance by 40 percent is caused by the use of the heavy crude oil. We should not stop... [changes thought] As I explained at the beginning, my explanation would be objective and clear, not advisory. These are the four causes that have prevented us from keeping this 23-percent maintenance level.

We have not dreamed—nor does the country need to—of achieving this 23 percent. But today, we cannot provide any currency to achieve another 23 percent in two years. This is not possible. But having only 50 percent of available capacity has created this situation of not being able to meet current demands, or an important part of the demand. We must begin recovering that capacity that has been lost. We are going to explain this further later.

In sum, industry has something we call the ABC factor. It has an "A," a "B," and a "C". The "A" represents the labor force, the man, his discipline and productivity. The "B" implies ensuring material provisions, its financing; and "C" represents the maintenance and repair work.

If "B" fails—that is, the material provision insurance and the financing, et cetera,—the repair and maintenance work also fails. The men, represented by "A," have faced this. I have to say that when a man is working in a thermoelectric plant and he sees a problem, a leak, some difficulty, or a need for repair—which he used to do with discipline but now is unable to do for lack of resources—then discipline, productivity, and the labor force are affected. The energy industry has failed—that is, the part of it that cannot be disregarded in any industry—has failed. And I am going to further explain the solutions the country has found to reverse this situation.

But as I was saying, we cannot work miracles. No solution will be found in 15 days, one month, two months, or three months. No, it cannot be, and I have to explain this clearly to prevent any confusion or doubts. This is very important. The people will rest assured when they are aware of the decisions made.

[Rodriguez] Is this a gradual recovery?

[Portal] Yes. It is a gradual recovery, a gradual and important recovery, and this will be explained in the solutions found.

Now, to conclude this first topic, because I must speak briefly about the issue of consumption in the introduction, I wanted to discuss the capacity available for this year—in other words, from the 50 or 45 percent that we have available for April. The average for the first quarter was 50 percent. In April, we had to take a Japanese unit out of service, which was one of the most efficient units in Cienfuegos' system. I believe it would be good to explain this:

It was one of the better units in our system. A few hours before the youth day celebrations began, we were analyzing the problems. There had been vibrations in the turbines and problems with the boiler. The repairs would require us to shut down the unit for seven days. Our comrades recommended that we shut down the plant, so we shut it down. Everytime this happens, we are going to act accordingly. The population must understand that despite the pressure, tension, and numerous difficulties that we may have, we will always have to act in that manner because of professionalism and discipline. We will not give the order to keep a unit in operation so that we later end up with greater problems.

That unit I was talking about has already been restarted. As a matter of fact, in April or May, that plant should have already reached its maximum designed capacity. That unit is already about 15 years old and we are sure it will run well during April and May, until we complete the harvest and other activities. If there are problems and we do not shut it down, we could have a difficult situation.

That is why in April, our capacity dropped to 44 percent. By December, we should be at 60 percent. What are we doing and what do we have to do to reach 60 percent? We will have to provide maintenance and repairs to 1,800 megawatts of those that are currently installed. This is a high percentage; almost 60 percent of all the generating plants, but it can be done.

I brought information with me about how the installed capacity in each one of the main thermoelectric plants will behave. I believe it is useful...it is correct. This lists the contribution that each thermoelectric plant must make. It is on the graph and can be explained, right?

[Rodriguez] Yes, because we are also broadcasting through Radio Rebelde.

[Portal] Oh, okay. The Mariel generating plant, which is currently operating at 39 percent of its capacity, will end the year with 58 percent of its capacity. The plant in Santa Cruz, which is operating at 40 percent of its capacity, will end the year with 80 percent of its capacity, with the two units of 100 [not further specified] that it currently has in operation. In the solutions, we are going to provide more interesting information on that generating plant.

Havana City—the link that is generated in Havana City, which is composed of Talla Piedra, Regla, and Frank Pais—is where the oldest units are concentrated. They are the units of highest specific consumption—400 grams per kilowatt. The original idea was to keep those units as reserves in the national electric system. Today, we propose to restore their installed capacity. Forces from the Ministry of Construction, government and party leadership in Havana, as well as our comrades, believe it possible to restore those plants and bring the capital to 53 percent of its available capacity, which is almost 136 megawatts, by the end of the year.

We are being conservative in giving these figures. They have planned to do even more. They have even set the goal of recovering another plant called the Frank Pais, which is also in the capital and which has two generating units. Here we have two blocks, imported from Czechoslovakia. The rest are from the capitalist era.

The Matanzas generating plant is currently at 100 percent of its capacity and will close the year with 100

percent. Here I want to pause and say that in September we will close that plant to do an overhaul.

[Rodriguez] For how many days?

[Portal] They figure it will be approximately 27 or 30 days. We may be able to do it in less. By that time, in September or October, we should have repaired other units, to minimize the effect. In Cienfuegos, we currently have 92 percent and should end the year with 52 percent. Why? Because, in December, when the Matanzas plant is back in operation—we must take into account the sugar harvest and the consumption—the large unit of Cienfuegos will be taken offline until the first few days of January.

What about Nuevitas? Nuevitas does not burn domestic crude oil. They are Czechoslovakian units—three of 125 megawatts, and three of 64 megawatts. As you can see, it is at 32 percent of its capacity. It is one of the places most affected. Those plants have different problems of a technical and material nature. Our goal is to bring Nuevitas to 50 percent by December. There is a chance we will be able to do better, but there are some factors we must consider. We prefer to be conservative.

The Rente power plant in Santiago de Cuba is currently at 33 percent of its capacity, and they should end December with 60 percent. The people in Santiago de Cuba are sure they will be able to accomplish this, reaching 300 megawatts. As you can see, we currently have 1,378 megawatts; and we should reach 1995 with 1,890 megawatts. That is more than 500 megawatts more by the end of the year. With that capacity, we can eliminate the power outages during the day, for example, which affect the economy and the population. We should have a schedule of power outages that is more reasonable for the population.

For this purpose, I am going to explain the measures being adopted, and the guarantees. That is, this is not an explanation without a basis. This explanation has a basis that I will explain when I get to explaining the solutions.

What I have to explain concerning consumption is brief, but perhaps it is the most difficult and most complex aspect. We will need the people's participation for this. It is as folows:

This year, electricity consumption is increasing. It is a modest increase, of close to 6 percent, but an increase that began last year when generation began to drop. That is, this 6-percent increase is not something... [changes thought] There is part of the economy being reactivated.

Now, Cuban families have consumed 14 percent more electricity during this quarter as compared to the previous year.

[Rodriguez] Is this a 14-percent increase?

[Portal] Yes, an increase of 14 percent, despite the blackouts and interruptions in the energy supply. This is essentially due to the use of electric stoves. This can be clearly seen at 1200 [local time], for instance, when generation increases by 300 megawatts more than last year. And at 2000 [local time], generation increases by 350 megawatts. There is a percentage of families who are very much linked to the use of liquefied gas, processed gas, and kerosene [luz brillante] nationwide, but today they are cooking on electric stoves of many types, even homemade stoves. This has created a situation that aggravates the matter.

I was explaining that this is the most complex issue because we cannot say that the liquefied gas or the kerosene shortage will be solved immediately because we cannot say that we have the currency necessary to solve this problem. We cannot yet say that we have the necessary resources. The same thing can be said about the other fuels. An aggravation of the fuel shortage would also aggravate our situation. I must objectively say, and clearly explain to the people that this increase in consumption cannot be met, not even by improving the thermoelectric plants or the electrical network. And today we cannot ask the people to give up that way of cooking because there is no other, better way. But to the extent that we can manage to restore the supply of liquefied gas and of kerosene, this situation must be reversed.

[Rodriguez] Then we must stop using the electric stoves.

[Portal] Yes, we must stop using electric stoves. This is nothing new. That is, the country has not really foreseen this during this period or during this century. In the first place, the country does not have the necessary thermoelectric plants for that. That is, out of two million inhabitants, one million are using electricity for cooking, and there is no thermoelectric plant that can guarantee this. We must return to the past.

The same thing happens with the electricity network. In a block or a zone where you live, some 10, 15, or 20 percent of the families might be using electricity for cooking. Well, that transformer at that pole will not resist, that cable will not resist long enough, nor will the internal electrical installations in homes take this increase in consumption. This is a very complex problem, and I wanted to explain this situation, stemming from the increase in electricity consumption. We must try to recover the supply of liquefied gas, the gas that is sold on the street [passage indistinct].

In the future, when we can make investments in the sugar mills and the situation with the special period is a bit more favorable, we will have to think about gas, which also requires a specific infrastructure.

But regarding electricity, it will be impossible for the Cuban population to use electricity to cook over the next 10 to 15 years without nuclear reactors or anything else. We are going to have no alternative but to ask for the population's cooperation and discipline. In other words, as we.... [changes thought] Furthermore, there are all types of stoves. You can figure it out for yourselves. There are stoves with coils that consume 1 kilowatt of

electricity. Cuba has 2.7 million families. Just 100,000 families using these stoves could consume 100 megawatts.

And 200,000 families will consume 200 megawatts; 300,000 families will consume 300 megawatts. That is what the Matanzas thermoelectric plant generates. Then 500,000 families will consume 500 megawatts, but there is no way to cope with this. Today there is no way to cope with this. You have seen that the peak demand... [changes thought] And not seeking to justify the explanation or to change the thought, I do not want to refer to other increases in energy consumption. But in the television schedule, for instance, we know that there are illegal installations being made, so if the use of television is increased, this will also increase consumption.

There are other things increasing the consumption of electricity. The most significant of all is the electric stove. This should not be. It can affect other activities that are vital to the economy. The population itself suffers because someone who has this type of stove causes an outage for three or four other families. In other words, in just three or four hours, the situation becomes complicated and one part of the population affects another. That is, the outages get off schedule. This is a phenomenon that I wanted to explain.

[Rodriguez] Mr. Minister, I believe the Cuban population prefers cooking with gas rather than with electricity. I believe they will cooperate, especially since they prefer to cook with other types of....

[Portal, interrupting] Yes, but 70 percent of the population cooks with kerosene [luzbrillante]. At this point, the population cannot stop cooking with kerosene. When the Revolution triumphed, half the population was cooking with wood and coal—52 percent of the population.

[Hector Rodriguez] Fifty-two percent?

[Portal] Yes, they used wood and coal. The use of kerosene and gas increased, and the living standard improved. Nevertheless, this is not the best fuel to use. As you have already mentioned, gas is much better.

To begin discussing solutions, I wanted to explain that the electricity we have.... [changes thought] It has been repeatedly explained that electricity is not stored, but instead, is generated at the moment. The population can see that as the power plants generate electricity, the energy is immediately consumed.

In the past, we always had back-up power plants generating at lower capacity. As soon as there were problems, their capacity was increased. All it took was anywhere between 1 and 10 minutes. It was very fast. We do not have this today. When a generating unit is taken offline, there is an immediate outage or interruption that cannot be announced in advance because it is practically instantaneous. The country and the population suffer very much because of this, and the situation will not be solved immediately because of the problem we have with generating capacity.

The other thing that is very clear is that our system is set up like other systems in other parts of the world: It does not take away electricity, but supplies electricity. In other words, the electrical networks are to supply. We have made several changes and small investments to isolate certain services from the normal circuits. These are hospitals; economic activities important for the country; the tourism industry, to a certain extent; and the sugar mills.

But here in Havana City, approximately 30 percent of the families practically never have power outages, such as in Habana Vieja, where it would be technologically impossible. There are other parts of Centro Habana and parts of Vedado, where it would also be impossible. There are also circuits associated with a pediatric hospital, the Hermanos Almeijeiras, and the Calixto Garcia, where it is very difficult to isolate the families. What happens is that families not on those circuits suffer longer outages.

In July and August of 1993, we agreed that during times of difficulty, especially here in the capital, ar.d in the rest of the provinces they also do this.... [changes thought] I believe I should explain that there are several provinces that, despite last year's improvement, have had anywhere from 12 to 16 hours of outages a day for many days, weeks, months. In other words, what happened in the capital for 15 days [as heard] is similar to the rest of the country. The rest of the country has been facing a very serious situation.

Because of the concentration level that exists in the capital, where approximately 2 million people live, and because of the problems we have been having, we always try to prioritize the capital. But at this moment, at the height of the sugar harvest, when not producing sugar, or the plan being affected by power outages would be a hard blow to our country, we must guarantee the energy needed for all exportable activities: the sugar harvest, the nickel industry, the tobacco harvest, for which electricity is used to dry the leaves. There have even been outages in this area. We have had to make an extra effort to prevent outages for that industry. We must preserve those activities. I believe the population must agree with this because we are defending the population and the country when we act in this manner.

It is true that not everyone has a relative in the hospital, but we cannot become uneasy, nervous, or tense and take the energy away from a pediatric hospital, or another important hospital where there are sick people, or people having surgery.

I mention this because there have been incidents in various places. Some malicious people believe that the electric service will be restored through that type of pressure. I can assure you of two things: First, we act with professionalism in this and are convinced it is the

way we must behave. When the power is interrupted in a place.... [changes thought] Secondly, we act with conviction. We are defending this like the majority of the population. That is one thing that cannot be changed. In other words, the fact that one acts with conviction in not affecting hospitals, water management systems, or cold storage centers which cannot be changed.

So, they can do what they want, but we.... [changes thought] Our people must trust that we will continue to act that way.

[Rodriguez] That is fair.

[Portal] Do not worry about that. There are comrades who have been mistaken, but with much dignity and authority, we are going to continue acting that way.

There are no privileges or anything like that in relation to the outages. Banish the idea. If there are things that are considered unjust, they must be reported and we will act on them. In other words, we do not accept that type of behavior from our comrades. I wanted to make that very clear.

Well, let us talk about material guarantees and their financing. This year, we already have financing for some $3 million in resources, which are arriving. We are talking about steel, special tubing, electrodes [electrodos], and gaskets. Part of this is already arriving. Apart from this, there is another $7 million which will be progressively allocated throughout the year. Between the two, there is $10 million destined for the generation of electricity.

It is not something reaching 70 or 80 percent, but sufficient to meet what the country has set as an objective. I already explained that $2 million was provided last year, and that this year, there is $10 million. This is five times more than last year. But we must administer this money. This money is not administered by any bureaucratic apparatus, but by the same comrades who are conducting the maintenance work and who make the decisions on what must be purchased now and what must be purchased later. In this manner, the country has thus progressed a great deal. That is, we have improved this part of the administration. These people who must decide on what to buy are people with experience, knowledge, and training.

Second measure: the preparation and implementation of the maintenance and repair works I already explained. I want to add that this will affect practically 60 percent of the installed capacity today: that is, 1,800 megawatts.

This is very important because it will give more reliability to the system. That is, if we are today putting into operation a thermoelectric plant that experienced a breakdown in the pipeline or some kind of leak, well, when this plant is repaired and maintained, this plant gains more reliability, and thus there will be fewer blackouts [words indistinct] and for this reason I mention this as a second measure. This graph is intended to increase the reliability, not only a percentage of [passage indistinct] and the maintenance workers.

This means that our government officials have adopted an exceptional measure concerning the thermoelectric plants and the maintenance shops. The workers will also receive special incentives, especially those who are directly involved, beginning with the top engineer of a thermoelectric plant, that man who plays the role of a director. I am referring to the top engineer and all those under him. I am referring to that man who is there on Saturday and on Sunday; that man who has a family, and has the same needs in his home as any other Cuban citizen; that man in charge of that shift, the plant operators who work Saturdays and Sundays.

In our current situation, these comrades are continuously submitted to a tremendous workload and pressure. Imagine working Saturdays, Sunday nights, early morning. They also have to pick up other workers so the plant may be working at top level to improve the situation. This is the prevailing situation.

We have been talking to other workers, to other colleagues from other ministries, and everyone agrees with the measures adopted in the electricity area, because we know that the harvest is being carried out under very difficult conditions by workers in the sugar industry, which is our main industry. We are aware of the workers' situation in this area. I am certain that those workers are in agreement with measures adopted in the thermoelectric plants because they know that workers here are also working like them, 365 days a year.

I wish to add that those workers would agree with the incentives to be given to the workers of the thermoelectric plants because they are aware of the difficult conditions under which they are working. These incentives, which will be in food, et cetera, will be rigorously implemented.

We already have the first experience. It has to do with discipline. To achieve the incentive that will be established, the worker must have zero absence.

[Rodriguez] Zero absence?

[Portal] Yes, zero absence, and that includes tardiness. No tardiness will be allowed. This also goes for sickness, because if during the month a comrade gets sick and is taken to the hospital or is treated at home, well, it must be justified. But that is not enough. I say this because the sick leave rate is very high, and it does not justify absenteeism. To achieve the incentives, the worker must have zero absence.

The Basic Industry Ministry has special infirmaries for those workers with some kind of problem. That is, we have professionalism and morale, and a revolutionary health system. We take care of any worker who might get sick. If he needs help at home, we go to his house to help him. But that is as far as we can go. That is, this system of giving incentives will be very strict.

[Rodriguez] These incentives are not for all, just for the best, for those who fulfill their jobs.

[Portal] Yes, for the good workers. Well, I am talking about discipline. And the other aspect I would like to mention is the fulfillment of what I have just explained; that is, the availability factor of thermoelectric plants, the fulfillment of the repair and maintenance work. Listen, most of our workers are well-disciplined. They are not worried about this. But I have to say it because it must be clear to all sectors that this is an exceptional decision, and that the country has made this decision, together with the workers, and it aims at obtaining a result. Otherwise, it will just be a mess. And it will not be that way. If the country and the Revolution must trust someone, the workers from the electricity area are the first to be trusted.

This second measure looks more like an incentive because the country and society want to recognize the role played by the workers. I think this will yield a result. Yesterday, the directors of the thermoelectric plants, the union leaders, and our comrades have ratified the conditions under which this incentive will be granted. We think that within the next few days it will be implemented, especially during the first days of May.

The other matter I wanted to discuss is that related to the support given to the thermoelectric plants. The country's constructive capacity is strong, and the Ministry of Construction is supporting the repair and maintenance work both in Santiago de Cuba and in Mariel, as well as in Nuevitas. That is, to the extent that the resources arrive, the country will have more possibilities for facing this problem. The SIME [Steelworking Industry] is doing the same.

Concerning the consumption of electricity, both in state organizations and in the homes, I just wanted to say the following: We have to be very strict concerning production in the most effective companies. This is being done by all ministries. The electricity received must be used well. All the unimportant areas must be eliminated, such as air conditioners. These must be eliminated. That is, consumption must be minimal. During these difficult months, we must try to use it as little as possible.

Now, let me refer to the prioritized organizations, the hospitals, the hotels, some industries, [changes thought] well, there are industries that finance their own fuel and give away their dollars; these are not prioritized industries. Several of our comrades have traveled abroad. We have visited some countries and were able to see what happens in hotels at dawn or in the evening—all lights and systems are extinguished. Well, I do not want to [words indistinct]. The organizations are already working in making a thorough control or inspection, or whatever might be necessary, to prevent the electricity from being misused at a given time of day. We must adopt these measures now more than ever. This will be indispensable over the next few months.

A new system is being prepared in the capital, which is more complex. It is a disconnection system that will be implemented when a thermoelectric plant unexpectedly stops operating. That is, there will be a system to regulate the level of electricity supply to help us regulate consumption. That is, if 30 percent of the overall capacity is to be released, well, that is what we are going to do. We are working on this.

Finally, I also want to mention something I consider important, that there are two thermoelectric plants under construction. One in Holguin, specifically in Felton. Both were made by Czechoslovakia. But the company that had supplied them has fulfilled its commitment. In previous years when we had a serious fuel shortage that also affected the nickel plant located in the same province, these units helped guarantee the supply of energy. And we expect to finish the first unit by the end of the year.

[Rodriguez] The one in Felton.

[Portal] Yes, in Felton. This unit can produce 250 megawatts. In Santiago de Cuba the Rente plant has not been able to stabilize the generation of more than 200 megawatts during the entire year. You can thus imagine the significance of generating 250 megawatts by the end of the year in the eastern region, starting in Las Tunas. More than 3.6 million Cubans live in this area, that is, 35 percent of our population. This means that electricity generation in this territory will be improved, and this will also improve the supply of electricity in the western region because there will be no more need to extend electricity supply toward the eastern region. This is to take place by the end of the year, and is not something that will take place right now. But I wanted to tell you that we are receiving resources little by little. The work has not been suspended and the workers are prepared to continue. I believe this is objective information given by the provincial government, the party, the Construction Ministry, and the workers' contingent. This can really be achieved, and perhaps 18 or 24 months later we will have the second unit. That means 500 megawatts. That is, if the overall system generates 3,000 megawatts, 500 megawatts represent almost 15 percent, between 12 and 15 percent.

There is another 100-megawatt unit, unit number 11 of the Soviet- made 100-megawatt plants. In the eastern part of Havana there are five 200-megawatt units. There are three 100-megwatt and five 200-megawatt units. The five 200-megawatt units are no longer operating and will not be repaired. They are part of other aspirations, of other levels of development which we will not reach. But that 100-megawatt unit is very important. As I explained before, it is sitting on an oil deposit. Thus, some 350 new megawatts will be generated by the end of the year. This is almost 12 percent. This is a unit that will also improve the country's generation, by almost 12 percent of the overall production. And when the other 250-megawatt unit begins operating, it will increase by another percentage point. If we generate 500 or 600 megawatts in the

east, that is almost 20 percent of the overall system. But this is still under construction; this is what we wanted to explain in this introduction.

[Rodriguez] Very well, minister. Let us now give the floor to our guests, the reporters. I do not know whether to begin from the left or the right. I think Maribel wants to speak. Maribel Acosta is from Radio Rebelde.

[Acosta] The explanation has been very broad, and we wanted to get into details. According to your explanation, the energy crisis we are experiencing today is caused by the thermoelectric plants and not by the petroleum crisis. You also said that the use of Cuban crude oil was relatively safe, that is, that the maintenance problem existed with or without the use of the Cuban petroleum, so you did not proscribe the use of the Cuban oil. You also mentioned a maintenance timetable which will be implemented soon, and that this must lead the country to reach a generating capacity of 60 percent by the end of the year. My question is this: How long or when will the current blackouts be reduced? After such a long time, how will this situation, specifically the situation of the blackouts, be reversed?

[Portal] Maribel, this situation is affecting the entire country. The situation in the capital today is what the provinces have been experiencing for many months. This has been a lengthy period. The situation prevailing over the past 15 days because of the breakdown of the Cespedes thermoelectric plant, which I already explained, and because of other failures here in the capital, I cannot say is exceptional. This situation has been affecting the entire country, but here in the capital the situation is worse because of the situation of services, overpopulation, the tall buildings...[changes thought] that is, we are well aware of this situation; even the water supply was affected at a given moment. That is, this is a very difficult situation.

Then, the generation of electricity has not been restricted to 15 hours. That is, it has been improving because it was dropped to nine and eight hours. But I want to explain this because in your question you mentioned the fuel issue, and we cannot say that there will be no difficulties with fuel. We will have difficult moments throughout the year, and it is possible that we may have a fuel shortage. We must be prepared not only to include the available capacity but to face any difficulty.

For this reason I was explaining the measures that will be adopted. I explained in the beginning that this is not possible. I explained in the beginning that we are going to seek solutions, not miracles. We do not think blackouts will be solved in a short period of time. It is not possible, not even by generating more electricity or producing more fuel, because today we are generating a certain amount of electricity; we cannot generate, just overnight, the same amount of electricity we used to generate some three years ago. The country does not have enough currency to say that the blackouts will end in one, two, three, or five months. The timetable of repairs, Maribel, is being fulfilled. That is, the Matanzas [plant] was paralyzed in September and we are already beginning to recover our capacity. I said that when the Matanzas [plant] stopped operating, generating capacity was approximately 36 percent; now we have between 44 and 45 percent, and it must keep increasing to stabilize at 50 percent by July or August. Then it must keep increasing to reach 60 percent. Do you understand this?

[Acosta] And what would this 60 percent represent as far as the blackouts?

[Portal] Well, concerning electricity generation, we believe that by increasing generation to 60 percent by the end of the year, the blackouts during the day will be eliminated. That is my belief. The blackouts that take place at night...[changes thought] well, there must be other reasons. But I do not want to give you the idea that there will be no problem with fuel, that everything has been stabilized, etc. No. The problems I have mentioned concerning financing...[changes thought] the nickel production and not even the sugar industry will be sufficient to solve this problem. I want to remind you that we started the blackouts in late 1989 and throughout 1990. That is, we had to start blackouts because it was impossible to avoid them, even by importing 6 million tons of petroleum, and much less with the 1.2 million tons we will have this year. We hope for a little more.

[Rodriguez] Of national crude oil?

[Portal] Yes, national crude oil. If we did not have the national crude, Maribel, I could not have told you this story.

[Rodriguez] That is, if we speak in sports terms, we have saved the game. It has saved our game. Susana Lee, your turn to ask.

[Lee] Minister, you have already answered a number of questions we and some listeners wanted to ask. Nevertheless, I want to ask you something about electricity bills. With so many blackouts, the bills have also been increased. This is one question, on electricity bills. Moreover, in the workers' parliaments which were held recently, many people proposed raising the electricity rate as a way to streamline the economy. What is the truth about this, or what are your ideas about it?

[Portal] On this issue, I am forced to say that Cuba is one of the countries where people pay their electricity bills with greater discipline. I must say this, now that you ask me this question about bills. This shows that our people....[changes thought] We have 2.5 million families who must pay for the electricity they use. And today the family's debt for electricity is less than [words indistinct]. This is only one example. The same thing happens with the state. This is the largest organization in the country and it has a billing system different from other state organizations, but it is a system that works. Now that you have asked the question, I want to convey my appreciation for that discipline, which has not been lost.

[Rodriguez] Does everyone pay electricity bills?

[Portal] Yes, everyone does. It is true that some bills are collected at the house, but bills can also be paid in one of our units, at the banks, or at the post office. There are easy ways to pay these bills, but the people....[changes thought] Well, in some provinces payments have been delayed, but have been recovered and the discipline has not been lost.

The electricity rate per family has increased 14 percent despite the blackouts. It is obvious, Susana, that when the blackouts are restored—and I thank you for asking this question because it gives me the opportunity to explain this—when we restore the electricity supply, it surges into the system, the refrigerator, the television set, the lights, etc.; everything is turned on, and the discipline which has been excellent is lost. When one gets used to cooking with electricity, it is impossible to consume less electricity, even when there are blackouts at the time for cooking, when electricity is in heavy demand. For this reason I think there is an increase in the electricity bills, and of course the people worry about this situation. But part of the energy is recovered despite the blackout. Of course, television programs are not recovered. But the iron and the refrigerator do recover some of the energy. That is, part of the energy is recovered. This has been demonstrated, and the electric meters record it and it must be paid. That must be the cause of the increase.

The other question is also important. Many capitalist countries, especially those in which the consumer society supposedly tends to increase expenditures, have performed calculations and reached the conclusion that they save more or obtain more benefits from increasing the utility rates, although this might favor savings, than from building new thermoelectric plants and increasing the generating capacity. This is true in the United States and other countries. Our rates are fixed: nine cents, regardless of whether consumption is higher or lower. Most countries have already been replacing this system gradually: the greater the consumption, the higher....[changes thought] This is just the opposite of what prevailed here after the Revolution, when the greater the consumption, the lower the payment. This has been changing. Now, what is our conclusion?

No decision has been made on this; neither can I talk about rates. But we have analyzed the following: Forty-two percent of the Cuban population consumes up to 100 kwh of electricity. And this consumption is approximately 25, or between 25 and 30 [percent], of the overall energy in the residential sphere. That is almost half of the population.

[Rodriguez] It is 42 percent.

[Portal] Now, whom does that figure represent? That figure represents low-income families. We have this well calculated. There are the retired people, low-income workers, this or that, workers in general, etc. Well, one proposal is that the rate should be fixed for that part of the population. The rate that is valid today should be maintained. And this rate is up to nine pesos monthly. This is one idea.

Then, those families that consume between 100 and 300 kw must pay that rate up to the first 100 kw; above 100 kw, they must pay a different rate.

[Rodriguez] After 100 kw, the rate should be higher.

[Portal] Yes. If you double the price per kilowatt/hour to 20 pesos, to give an example, you are stimulating people not to consume over 100 kw. You know that today it is forbidden to consume over 300 kw. This is included in the plan, even though the use of electric stoves and so forth complicates it. But we will never authorize a consumption higher than 300 kw, even when this is stabilized. We will penalize consumption above 300 kw, and you know what the punishment will be: The electricity will be shut off for 10 days the first time, then for 30 days. This has been done several times. This has created discipline. This is a preliminary idea I am giving you, Susana.

[Rodriguez] And are you and the ministry studying this possibility?

[Portal] Yes. Well, other organizations are charged with studying how much is collected through this channel. But as we have been taught, electricity conservation is very important for us, not electricity sales. The problem is not to collect more but to prevent people from consuming more. And electricity rates cannot be liberated because in that case, a person who obtains money through several channels will be free to consume electricity. This will not be allowed. The plan must be maintained. This is the idea, Susana, and it seems to be accepted by most of the people. And if some of the people do not agree, well, we will have to raise the price above 100 kw and impose a very strong punishment.

[Rodriguez] The idea is to stimulate electricity conservation.

[Portal] That is the idea.

[Rodriguez] Osvaldo?

[Osvaldo Rodriguez] Minister, I want to return to the subject that most irritates people: the blackouts. You answered a question on why some zones are affected by blackouts while others are not, especially those priority zones such as hospitals, hotels, tourist centers, water pumping systems, and refrigeration plants. But some people think that blackouts are more frequent in their zones than in others and imagine that the frequency is lower in other provinces. Also, we have received calls here in the studio and are still receiving messages from our viewers stating that service is often interrupted, especially at night. It was mentioned that Revolution Square tonight was affected by intermittent blackouts. The lights were on and off several times tonight. People also asked why the ball games are played at night when we are facing this situation. Why aren't the games shifted

to the daytime? Perhaps Hector Rodriguez will help you answer this question. But, in general, I would like you to expand a little more on the outlook for improvement of the thermoelectric plants, on the outlook for blackouts and whether they save oil, because this is another point often asked by the people. Because, as you said, when the lights go back on, normally the refrigerators start working, everyone turns their equipment on, and consumption rises.

[Lee] I would like to add something to this: People have also asked about the zones not affected by blackouts in municipalities with underground power lines. Many television viewers have asked about this. Those people fear that the lines could develop problems because they are so old; they want to know what solutions there may be for the underground lines.

[Hector Rodriguez] That is like asking me...

[Portal, interrupting] Very well. There are circuits that are cut off. Not all circuits have the same load, the same number of houses, or the same economic objective. That is the fact.

The instructions given to our comrades is to try to be as fair as possible, that the blackouts be as equal as possible for all. If the blackout is for six hours, then it will be six hours for all. And if it is for four hours, then four hours for all. There may be some guidelines that are not being fulfilled during this period, but we are trying to fulfill them as much as possible. We are also trying to maintain the best discipline in this area.

But concerning the fact that we are being unfair with this or that circuit, and that anyone can reach that conclusion, I have my doubts. I find it very difficult. We are controlling this continuously, and the control is in effect. We are always trying to control everything, especially when there are complaints. And people are really zealous about this. Perhaps on some circuits the blackouts are a little bit longer, an hour or half-hour more, because of the load affecting that circuit.

Since consumption and generation are simultaneous, measures are adopted to include 50 megawatts more to this or that circuit. Then the capital must choose the circuits and distribute power gradually. If there is one circuit with a load of 25 megawatts, or two circuits with 25 megawatts each, or one circuit with 30 and another with 20 megawatts, and there is another circuit with 10 megawatts, the circuit with 10 megawatts will wait, and the others will be added to a little more, and the following day a little more will be given to this and to another circuit, until the national power system says: Now you can add another load. This happens everyday. That is, the additional charge cannot be added instantly. It must be established gradually. So this is not and will not be exact. It is not possible.

And there are people who have been doing this for more than three years. This has been approved. The people know that when electricity generation was rather stable—which we hope to recover by the end the year—there was discipline. The disconnection hours were well established. This was an achievement, and I am certain that this will be restored to the extent that the conditions improve.

Now, connection or disconnection is usually the consequence of the overload on the circuits. This is a fact which I tried to explain, especially concerning the most complicated problems such as electric stoves, the overload on circuits, etc. I tried to explain this because when a transformer is overloaded, there is no way to solve it. And the light is turned on and off, on and off, and transformers cannot take this for a long time like a switch that is just turned on and off.

You must have seen also that tree pruning has begun. A tree branch can also cause a problem to a circuit or to a transformer. But this is not the essential thing we are discussing today. The essential thing we are discussing today is the overload on circuits that cannot handle a further increase.

Ball games do not consume more than what 500 families would consume. Ball games are played in a stadium. You know that the programming has been changed, adjusted. Most games take place during the day, and this is a recreational activity very important to our people, for their virtue and [word indistinct]. But concerning the playoffs that are played in the stadium...

[Hector Rodriguez, interrupting] Yes, there is only one national stadium, and the games are played there during the day.

[Portal] Then 2.5 million families will have electricity. And perhaps some 1,500 families will be affected when this occurs. Well, I think, Osvaldo, that for the time being, independently of the critical situation we are facing, we must try to maintain that entertainment which is very important.

[Hector Rodriguez] It is the main national entertainment.

[Portal] Yes. What was your question, Susana?

[Lee] I asked about the underground cables.

[Portal] Oh, yes. It is true that the underground network in Habana Vieja and part of central Havana is rather old. Part of the cables have been replaced, but the problem here is not the cables themselves but the system. It was a very modern and sophisticated system for that time. It automatically regulates the voltage when there is an interruption and reestablishes it through a different channel. I think it is too costly for Habana Vieja, for the historical part of Havana, to have that type of electrical system. And we must take care of it as something precious in the capital. What we have to do in that zone, and in all priority zones, is to demand, to be very scrupulous on electricity conservation. Yesterday, for instance, in order to make the distribution, we cut off the

circuit; but we turned it on again, especially since it creates problems for some refrigeration facilities. For this reason this zone is turned off only in difficult and unavoidable moments. The system in this zone is expected to last several years more, and it will because we are taking good care of it. It has not been abandoned. But what you said is true, and we must demand a maximum savings there, both by the state organizations and by the people who live there.

[Hector Rodriguez] Does that answer your question, Maribel?

[Acosta] Yes, thank you. Comrade minister, you have said that $10 million will be invested this year in maintenance and repair of the thermoelectric plants. What does this figure represent in relation to the current needs? And also, in our current relations with the former Socialist Bloc, to what extent is our country or our technology capable of guaranteeing the technology which you said has reached 66 percent of the thermoelectric plants existing in the country, and are the new investments linked to these plants?

[Portal] Yes. Well, we have $10 million. And you might ask: What is the minimum necessary for the electrical system as a whole? Considering the $35 million we used to receive for the electrical network, for transformers and all the rest of the system, the level was much higher. The needs for the thermoelectric plants could be estimated at approximately $20 million, between $18 and $20 million. But with $10 million we will be able to fulfill what has been established, as I have explained. This is an important figure.

Negotiations are under way with Russian and Czech officials to explore the possibility of obtaining some resources for these thermoelectric plants. They have listened to our requests with great responsibility and gravity and they are studying the possibility of participation or economic cooperation. But this cooperation will be financed and we must pay for it. I am not talking about any other type of assistance. I am talking about economic cooperation, about business. We hope this will be resolved before the end of the year, and I think it will. But I do not want to confirm this categorically or to create false expectations.

There are many people in these countries who regret what has happened to relations with our country; and there is an idea, wish, will, to reestablish commercial relations with our country on new foundations. And we, of course, would never refuse to do this. Our people...[rephrases] I do not think that could have [words indistinct].

That is possible (?in Mariel). There is certain technological equipment, such as a turbine, or a generator...[rephrases] There are things that really must be taken care of by the factory that planned them. There are very specific things that were done there. There is a part of the thermoelectric plant that is universal. Let us say that to do this or that [words indistinct] you can substitute one piece of equipment by another. That is, it is always possible to obtain a part of the equipment in another country, if that problem exists. But, well, that possibility does exist, and I think it only fair to say so. That is to say: It is not an impossibility that our national electricity system could receive a certain participation from, do business with, this company of the two...[rephrases] of the countries that inherited the installations, the workshops, and factories that used to produce these (?installations).

[Hector Rodriguez] Osvaldo?.

[Osvaldo Rodriguez] Yes. Mr. Minister, the nation ended up practically paralyzed last year—its economy, its factories. However, at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, certain plants began operating, which I suppose has increased the demand for electricity. You explained—I refer once again to the chart by which you explained the repairs to, the maintenance of the thermoelectric plants—how capability is to be recovered. And I would ask you: Could the electricity system compromise the future of our economic recovery, which certain specialists see as being imminent?

[Portal] I can answer that categorically for you: With these measures that have been taken, the national electricity system, its generating capacity, is not going to constitute a brake to development or to exiting the special period. That is why, Osvaldito, it is good to reiterate: When I explained that 86 percent of the capacity...[rephrases] It is one of the countries with the newest electrical installations. I do not know whether there is any other 25 years old whose generating capacity is at 86 percent. It seems to me that very few countries (?can do this), and that has been created over these last 30 years of Revolution. I mean, that is a fact; understand, Osvaldo? And that is very reassuring.

The 500 megawatts [words indistinct] plus the 100 equals 600 additional new ones. I mean: In order to pull out of the special period over the next few years, by the end of the century, the nation's installed capacity today, by maintaining and repairing and everything that we have explained that we have already begun to do and to reestablish...[rephrases] There is no doubt: The electricity networks are powerful. The country is crossed from east to west with 220-volt and 110-volt lines, which must also receive maintenance. But powerful substations were established on most of the national territory. I reaffirm what I explained a while ago. And the generating capacity is recoverable.

Later, at some point in the future, we will have to build new thermoelectric plants, of course, but....[leaves sentence unfinished]

I also want to tell you that the country anticipated...[rephrases] for example, there are the five...[rephrases] this one here in eastern Havana, a thermoelectric plant which is prepared to be [words indistinct]. The one in Matanzas is ready for another to be set up beside it. We would no longer have to build a canal to supply and drain sea

water. All the workshops and all that are already there. Felton was planned to accommodate two more units. That is to say that we today have—just as was done in Mariel, which was planned to accommodate eight units although it began with two or four or so...[rephrases] that, today, is very important: These three thermoelectric plants—Felton, the one in Havana, and the one in Matanzas—are prepared to expand their capacities without the necessity for big investments in civil engineering, etc. The machines do have to be purchased; that is something we will have to take into account in the future, if necessary. It would be very quick work to install, to expand capacity, as developments might require of us.

[Hector Rodriguez] Susana?

[Lee] Mr. Minister, you were speaking of oil extraction. You were talking about the importance of the almost 900,000 tons that are used to generate electricity. I think it would be a good idea for you to talk to us a little about the prospects that exist as regards oil extraction, about the work being done in the search for oil, about the new technologies that are being applied to increase efficiency in extraction. That is what I would like to ask you.

[Portal] I do not know whether this might not take me off the topic a little. I would not be against answering, but...[addresses moderator] if you authorize me to do so, I....[leaves sentence unfinished]

[Hector Rodriguez] We have time.

[Portal] Will anything be left on the other topic? Can we get into that?

[Hector Rodriguez] The matter of generating electricity has been exhausted.

[Acosta] Hector, fundamental concerns that we have heard from the population.

[Hector Rodriguez] I do not know whether the minister has anything else.

[Portal] I have tried to explain without exhortation, with the greatest possible objectivity, right? I would like perhaps to comment that the electricity sector workers—the sector chiefs, technicians, [words indistinct] in general—bear an extraordinary responsibility on their shoulders.

[Hector Rodriguez] Of course.

[Portal] They have the foundation, which is what has provided, I think, the authority, the respect for what we have had to do over these past three or four years—an authority won by being one of the branches that for 25 years, uninterruptedly, grew from year to year, without failing to grow for a single year. And with diminishing fuel consumption from year to year. Efficiency increased from 400 grams in 1959 to 270, through investments and so forth. That is not the work of the electricity sector workers alone. I mean, construction workers, the nation, the government, the Revolution all worked on it. But that foundation was exploited, and at a level comparable to that of the Western countries. That is important. The nation's 95-percent electrification is something spectacular. We know about other countries, in Asia, for example...[changes thought] Vietnam itself, with whose authorities we have spoken, is 35-percent electrified. In Latin America, there are other countries...[rephrases] (?low) countries. China itself is not electrified to the extent that we are. They may be at 75 or 80 percent. They have areas with many problems still, rural areas. The country is very large. It is very difficult. We, ourselves, have 95-percent electrification.

I say this now, at the end, to give confidence that we (?are going to solve) this problem. I mean, this is not a problem that will be delegated to improvised people, people who...[rephrases] No, we are really working, soberly, and there will be a response by the electricity industry, by our workers, by everyone. I think that the support from the Ministry of Construction, the comrades from the (?SIME) [Steelworking Industry], and the comrades from other forces that are going to join in, as the resources become available to us, is also important. This gives us great confidence, really, that the country will be able to recover from this situation we are in.

The other subject is one that is very...

[Hector Rodriguez, interrupting] Mr. Minister, excuse me: Before you go into (?that), a viewer has just called in and is asking—he seems not to be fully satisfied, even with all the explaining—whether the Cienfuegos CEN, the Cienfuegos Nuclear Power Plant, will be finished, and whether this would solve the country's electrical power problem.

[Portal] All right, then let us finish with the CEN.

[Hector Rodriguez] Then petroleum would be the last thing, right?

[Portal] Yes. Well, we halted the CEN. We halted it. The commander in chief himself, as you know, met with the workers there and explained the decision, one of the most painful we have had to make. The Russian and Cuban Governments have confirmed their will to do everything they possibly can to finish the CEN—the first and second reactors—their will, desire, and interest. Both governments need a third partner to participate in the Juragua CEN. The three countries would have to share that investment, and then, logically, sell for hard currency the energy generated at the Juragua CEN. And we would have to pay those countries for it, for our country—for the portion that would correspond to it.

The country does not today have the financial means to continue building the Juragua nuclear power plant, and we would have to effect a business deal of that nature.

The work has been preserved. The civil engineering work for the first reactor is finished. It is fabulous. There you have the reactor, and part of the equipment, preserved.

Over the past two years, the country has been inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], rigorous inspections that have helped counter propaganda campaigns abroad regarding CEN technology and so forth. We have received the IAEA technicians; their recommendations were that the CEN is being perfectly preserved and that a business deal can go forward with it, that the nuclear power plant can be continued.

If that inspection had not been positive, had there been any doubt, I would not be talking about this. So, I mean, those are the conditions today. The Russians, the Cuban and Russian Government and the energy authorities of the two countries, are today analyzing things and negotiating with a number of international firms that have expressed an interest in the matter.

That is very interesting. It is a complex business, as you can well imagine. Difficult, but it would really allow us to finish, if it is feasible and could happen.

These are very complex negotiations. Those are our prospects, as regards the CEN. We do not have, right now, the financial means to continue the work ourselves, alone. That is clear, and that is why the work was halted. And, very responsibly, both the comrade construction workers—who remain there—and our comrades who are prepared for exploitation, are there. And the CEN could be two years away from being finished.

If it were to be set up and finished, it would mean 400 megawatts of nuclear-generated power. That is what I can tell you regarding that matter.

[Acosta] Does the third partner already exist, Mr. Minister?

[Portal] No, and maybe if it did, I would not be able to tell you so, at this moment. [all chuckle] So let's go on to the oil: In the case of the oil...

[Hector Rodriguez, interrupting] You would not be able to tell us because they [not further identified] are so alert to every bit of business that Cuba does, to every single thing it might buy, so as to block it immediately, apply pressure immediately. Would that be the reason? Obviously.

[Portal] But as regards the technology of our nuclear power plant and all that, even serious U.S. authorities already acknowledge that the technology of our CEN is safe, that the CEN can be finished, that there is no problem. We have information from very important U.S. Government authorities that have acknowledged that there is no difficulty. That smooths out the way for other partners to be able to...[rephrases] finish the CEN. So, let's go on to the oil.

[Hector Rodriguez] Yes, that (?question) of Susana's is still floating around.

[Portal] The oil: Here, maybe we can share certain things that could be encouraging to our population. As is known, we divided the island up into blocs—both land and sea, some 26 blocs—for exploring for oil, and we have negotiated investments by several companies in oil exploration. To a certain extent, this is related to the energy thing, the nation's situation and all.

Why do I say this? Because this kind of business deal is one of the most difficult, because the foreign companies have to run the risk—investing, during a first stage, tens of millions of dollars and, in a second stage, hundreds of millions of dollars! That is: You have to put money into it. And in one way or another, over $50 million have already been invested by these companies in the Cuban oil business. All together, it is already nearing $100 million in seeking, exploring for, oil.

These companies invest, and if oil is found they recover their investment—through a part of that oil, depending on how much oil there is and what quality is obtained. If it is a big deposit, and the oil is good quality, it can be as much as 90 percent for the Cuban side and 10 percent for the foreign company. During the period of recovery of the investment, it is to be 50-50. Once the investment is recovered, in the first few years, once those are past, it depends on the volume and quality of oil found.

Well, of the seven most developed countries in the world—and I can mention the United States, Japan, the FRG [as heard], etc.—three are investing in petroleum exploration in Cuba. They are France—several companies—Canada, and Great Britain.

I do not think I am telling any secret in saying that Great Britain is the main U.S. ally, a country which in its parliamentary organizations has publicly studied its relations with Cuba. It did so in the House of Lords. And it is interesting to see how some British political figures and businessmen analyze the U.S. policy on Cuba, and how they realize that Americans have a double objective with us: a political objective, which obviously seeks to destroy the Revolution by all means; and an economic objective, which is to prevent other countries from investing in our country. When the United States decides to lift the blockade, let us say in 20 or 100 years [changes thought] or perhaps, if an important oil deposit is found, the blockade will no longer have any effect. I hope this will happen.

But it is quite interesting to see how these political figures analyzed this situation and reached the conclusion that it is important to favor the trade of the former British colonies which have natural, historical, and economic relations with us. They have realized that our touristic development must be related to the touristic development of many of those islands that live on tourism, and that this is the moment to begin. They have taken the first step. One of their companies has already signed a petroleum research contract. That is, there are three [as heard] countries: France, Canada, Great Britain, and also Sweden.

I am not talking about the U.S. Government, but about its oil companies, the U.S. businessmen from the petroleum sector, and other organizations such as the mining,

iron and steel, and tourism industry areas who have expressed concern about and are fully aware of our situation, hoping to be authorized to invest here. They have attended the meetings we held in Canada and in Great Britain—that is, in London and in Calgary—where our comrades submitted proposals. And the great U.S. companies were there; they obtained all the information they needed and they are up-to-date concerning this situation. That is, they are willing to come here, but they also have other interests; but we can see and feel that there is great interest in this area.

There is a search for oil today everywhere in Cuba, in different stages. In some parts we are using the seismic exploration system, which is a mandatory step. This is because the seismic system determines the soil structure, the age of the earth, the geology, and the characteristics of the place which are best for drilling. If these structures are not revealed, then no drilling takes place. That is the first step. It is a guiding step, but millions of dollars must be invested in that first step. If it takes place offshore, a special vessel will be necessary. But if it is carried out on land, well, equipment of highly developed technology is in use in the country.

Both on land and offshore, this highly sophisticated equipment will supplement the information—and it is fair to say this—the information we have developed with the former Soviet Union for many years. The country has been well studied. The country has seismic information; it has information on the geology of solid minerals and of petroleum and for this reason this study has been very useful, and for this reason we have made quick progress. And today we have signed contracts for exploration of the most promising areas in the country.

Then, at the conclusion of the seismic exploration step in some areas, it has been determined that there are seismic structures which are similar to the seismic structures of other countries and which offer good drilling prospects. Drilling has begun. Well, the drilling has begun offshore, and drilling by these companies will also begin on land within the next few days or next week. If the prospects were not good, we would not....[leaves sentence unfinished] Now, if this study shows that those sedimentary rocks are from the same time period as those in other countries where oil was found, and whether they contain petroleum or not, a decision will be made. But Cuba has oil; we hope to extract 1.2 million tons this year, and there are good prospects to increase this production.

Well, this is as much as I can tell you. We have taken the seismic step, and the drillings have begun in those places, and our hopes are not just abstract. Our hopes are real, and the prospects are also real.

I also want to add that if oil is found, or let us suppose that when an oil deposit is found, we must then determine how much petroleum is in that deposit; depending on the structure, three or four wells more must be drilled to determine the volume of the petroleum existing in that place. The exploitation comes later and can take two or three years, depending on the deposit and its characteristics. But I think it would be foolish to try to conceal any information from the people on this problem. I think it would be very encouraging for the people to receive any information of this type, and we are never going to conceal such information. I thought, therefore, that it was important to explain this.

These companies have other tasks which will also give us an idea of how promising the petroleum business is in Cuba. The fact is that using the old Soviet techniques, or the old Soviet wells, we have contracted foreign companies to exploit these wells. For instance, a foreign company chooses a well that was producing 30 tons, 20 tons, 15, or 10 tons, and, using more modern technology, increases the production of that well. Some have increased two, three, or four times more. Some have reached production of 60, 70, or 80 tons. And they started with 20 tons. Then this increase in oil, which Cuba was never going to have, was divided and shared with that company. That is, the basic production is not negotiated. That is ours. But if production is increased by using modern technology...[changes thought] and we have been doing this over the past few years. That is, the petroleum activity has this potential and we can enjoy it.

I did not want to discuss this from the political point of view; but, well, this is just a feeling I have, and I have to say it because this is what most Cubans are feeling. In this period, every time we sign a contract of this sort, whether on oil, nickel, mining in general, or in the quest of precious minerals, or in tourism, etc., with non-U.S. companies, we feel a satisfaction, and more than a satisfaction because we have no prejudice but an assurance that in the future we must not do this type of business with U.S. companies alone. This would imply compromising our economic independence for the third time with that powerful country. And this does not seem to be what we Cubans want. We could not avoid it if the blockade were lifted. But only in part, because we are not rejecting any offer. If the American people want to enjoy our beaches, etc., we are not going to say: Do not build hotels here; don't do this or that. It would be foolish on our part to refuse these things.

But it is good that we build our own hotels, or build them with the Spaniards, with the Italians or the Canadians, or with any country in the world. Well, the Americans are delaying this. But in the future, if the blockade is lifted, part of the U.S. tourists will have to go to those hotels. We realize—and it is something I was trying to convey—we feel as if we were winning a war of independence each time we do business with non-American capital. This is what I was trying to say.

But we cannot deny the fact that the United States, that powerful country, that market about which no one has any doubt because it is a high-level market with highly developed technology, can be attractive to us as well. This feeling is also shared by the other companies that come here today.

I want to add that we Cubans are loyal. We are loyal. The Cuban loyalty has been proven. We are loyal even to our African forefathers. And serious capitalists, representatives of the upstanding companies, also feel that when we do business with one of these companies, we are never going to betray them, not even when the United States decides to lift the blockade. Neither are we going to renegotiate the business or deals we have signed.

[Hector Rodriguez] We are serious and loyal.

[Portal] And this is the rationale of the electricity issue to which they refer so much. You have to see what is being published abroad, how the news is distorted and the treatment they give to this issue. They say: The country's electricity generating capacity has fallen apart; do not invest in this area anymore. Here is the truth about what they are saying.

For this reason, our reporters must try to be as objective as possible because it is obvious that they are trying to thwart, to discourage people. But prestigious people are arriving here continuously. And as soon as they arrive at the airport, they realize the problems we are facing, especially the blackouts, the transport and food problems, etc. Well, people immediately refer to our preparation and the possibilities of doing business here. They refer to our loyalty and honesty in our deals. No one has to offer $1 million to a minister, or $2 million to negotiate this or that. There is no corruption in government circles. Many serious people are coming here, and not just because they like to be here.

Not in vain are we in the 19th place in the world among countries where investments can be made with greater security. How many are behind us; but I do not want to mention names. I believe the press has already published this, but they can publish it again at any time; they can do it today, because this is something very important.

We are one of the most promising countries for investments. This also confirms our people's decision to fight and to overcome all our problems. They do not want to be caught in a situation of hunger, proceeding from here to there. No, our people do not want this. They are taking this calmly and with intelligence.

You can see that the situation stemming from the electricity problem is very difficult. But we are facing it and trying to overcome it. People know that this is not going to last forever, and that we are not going to die without having had a chance to fight and win.

We are also accused of not making changes, of not doing this or that, when changes were made only a few months ago. This is perceived by the capitalists who come here. We have made tremendous changes in the economy. A few years ago we would not even think of making these changes. We have made changes in agriculture, changes related to the presence of foreign capital, and to the decriminalization of the dollar. These changes hurt because they are often unfair, but we have made them courageously. We can also mention the self-employment jobs, communications with the world abroad, relations with the community of emigres, et cetera. These are crucial decisions, and we must consider that there are still millions of decisions to be made, decisions that are being studied.

But the decisions that were made are serious decisions, decisions that are very important for the country. These decisions are not reversible, and the peasants and agricultural workers know this. They know that over the past few months, the state administration has been replaced by cooperatives. They know that there are guarantees, that they have security, and that they can work the land as much as possible because the fruits they produce will not be taken away from them. These are important steps, because the most common criticisms we hear are that no measures have been adopted, that the country is idle, that no one works. This is inadmissible. For this reason I was saying that it is important to explain. I think it is my duty to explain this, to share this with the people. But we cannot often share this. Excuse me if I am taking too much of your time, Hector.

[Rodriguez] No, on the contrary. We thank you, minister. I only want, if you wish, minister, to read a question posed by a listener from Havana. It says: How much has the demand increased this year at peak-consumption hours as a result of the use of electric stoves?

[Portal] I mentioned this when I mentioned the 350 megawatts at peak hour, but I failed to give the percentage. The demand is increasing 24 percent. This is a high percentage, and we cannot cope with it.

[Osvaldo Rodriguez] Minister, now that you are returning to this subject of the electric stoves at the very end of your participation in this program, allow me to ask you something that also worries the people. The liquefied gas and the kerosene: When will their distribution be reestablished?

[Portal] Tremendous resources must be used to achieve this, and I cannot give you an exact date. This is not possible to predict. I could say May or June, but there is a timetable to repair the Nico Lopez refinery plant. In May, we are going to import a good amount of gas, which is produced by the [word indistinct]. But it is impossible to tell you that we are going to solve this problem in a short time. I am only ratifying what I said because this is one of the most difficult, complex issues we must solve within the next few months.

[Hector Rodriguez] The electric stove issue seems to be crucial.

[Portal] Yes.

[Acosta] Minister, concerning the petroleum prospects you mentioned, is there a possibility of finding light petroleum in the country?

[Portal] That is what we are looking for. [laughs]

[Hector Rodriguez] It must show up somewhere.

[Portal] But if heavy petroleum is found, it will be welcomed. I think I will be forced to explain that we would use it again. Not to talk about cement, but if it can be used in producing cement, it will be of help.

[Hector Rodriguez] Well, the minister has been with us for almost two hours. I think his explanations were very clear and broad. I want to thank the minister for his presence here. I think this is the first time he has participated in this program. I have been after him for a long time, and he has been saying that he would be glad to join us to talk about this crucial electricity generation issue in the country.

I want to thank him for being here with us and for all the information he has given to the country. I think all the information was correct and on the mark. I believe he was consistent with everything.

I also wish to thank the reporters who participated in this program, and who have made the presence of Basic Industry Minister Marcos Portal on this program possible. Thank you, Minister, and although this was your first participation, I hope it will not be the last.

[Portal] Thank you.

Science Workers Union Plenum Sets Objectives

FL2504184194 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Eduardo Gonzalez]

[Text] How good to participate in a union meeting that dedicated its time to the sector's main problems! That is what the fourth plenum of the science workers union in the city of Havana did. The plenum was held recently at the Center for Medicines Research and Development [Centro de Investigaciones y Desarrollo de Medicamentos], or CIDEN [acronymn as heard].

The leaders of the science workers union in the capital agreed to focus their efforts on the union's integrating influence, on strengthening the base-level organizations, and, fundamentally, on political-ideological work.

Their analysis concluded that the 146 assemblies of the Parliaments in the Workplace process held at scientific institutions, in which more than 28,400 workers participated, allow us to typify the political situation, the revolutionary atmosphere, economic management problems, and the monitoring of sector production and research.

As a first conclusion, they found that the political-ideological work of the union could be its biggest contribution to solving problems, based on the workers' high and militant morale and support for the Revolution. Working from that premise, the science workers union in the capital laid out for itself a series of concrete tasks.

The first opportunity will come at the Assemblies for Economic Efficiency, which are to begin in mid-May. During that process, each suggestion from the parliaments will be evaluated and the joint measures to be adopted by the various administrations, the Communist Party of Cuba, the union, and the UJC [Union of Young Communists] will start to become concrete reality. Among these measures are, for example, specific actions that will establish the obligation to bear in mind cost and efficiency indicators in connection with each and every task, decentralized down to the level of every individual researcher, technician, or support worker.

Another intent is that of taking advantage of the potential of mechanisms already in force, such as evaluations, to guarantee the suitability of science workers, in response to a majority demand expressed during the parliaments.

The union will take precise measures to restore labor discipline, as much to combat absenteeism as to get every worker to make the best possible use of the workday and to produce according to his position. Each center will go into greater depth regarding the concept and scope of self-financing, based on the premise that the nation needs for science to continue increasing its contribution to financing the nation's economy.

Jorge Lezcano, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba in Havana City Province, expressed his satisfaction at these vital subjects as the focal point of the attention of the science workers union. For his part, Alfredo Morales, CTC [Cuban Workers Federation] secretary general in the capital, used the occasion to explain that the Assemblies for Economic Efficiency differ radically from the old Production and Services Assemblies. He said that it is now the workers—jointly with the administration—who are seeking solutions to difficulties, and that the discussion now centers not only on production, per se, but also on efficiency of production. It seems the young science workers union, and particularly its organizations in the capital, are setting standards for a union management that has moved away from mere useless formalities and has set its sights on the main objectives of contributing to saving our societal project and attaining development.

The way the science workers union vanguards celebrate their successes constitutes proof of this. This past Sunday [24 April], they did voluntary work at the Augusto Cesar Sandino agricultural-livestock cooperative in San Antonio de los Banos. Meanwhile, the rest of the union members worked at cleaning up and beautifying their work centers.

Jordan Urges Agricultural Scientific Integration

FL2504192494 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] Alfredo Jordan Morales, Agriculture Minister and Politburo member, has said that the achievement of full integration of scientific centers is a priority, especially concerning the tasks of making furrows.

At the national meeting on miscellaneous crops, the agriculture minister said that the accomplishments and experience achieved so far are rather dispersed. It was decided at the meeting that the next planting campaign in the province [not further identified] will be designed with the participation of experts in the area.

Jordan presided over the creation of the 5 de Septiembre and 19 de Abril farms for miscellaneous crops in Jobabo Municipality in Las Tunas. These two farms work 50 and 40 caballerias, respectively.

Guantanamo Province Infrastructure Inspected

FL2304164194 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Text] The progress made in carrying out socioeconomic programs in Guantanamo Province was acknowledged today by a visiting ministerial committee headed by Division General Senen Casas Regueiro, who is also a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Casas Regueiro assessed as very positive the efforts that have been made by the workers of Guantanamo Province to eliminate as quickly as possible the consequences of the torrential rains of 1993. He also commented on the progress made in implementing guidelines left by a Politburo committee during a visit to the province two years ago, as well as the progress in reestablishing electric and telephone lines.

The rebuilding of canefield roads, railway lines, fountains, and other socioeconomic works are the result of the intense work of the residents of Guantanamo Province, as the ministerial committee that visited this province today acknowledged.

Havana Phone Number Change To Be Made

FL2504145494 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1155 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Telephone interview with Communications Services spokesman Jose Antonio Roche—live or recorded]

[Text] [Unidentified announcer] Let us go to Jose Antonio Roche, of the Communications Services here in Cuba. Renzoli [not further identified] said, privately, that wild changes are being made here in all the nation's telephones. Good morning, Roche.

[Roche] Good morning. Well, with the objective of reorganizing the telephone network in the city of Havana so as to allow the possibility of increased numerical combinations, at the telephone exchange for those numbers that begin with a seven and have five digits, as of Friday 29 April, people will have to add an eight to the number, giving those numbers six digits. For example, the number 7-2020 will, as of Friday, become 78-2020. This measure is being taken by the telephone company to reorganize its boards [pizarras] here in the capital.

[Announcer] So, now you know.

[Roche] The phone numbers beginning with seven will, as of the 29th, have six digits. People must now add an eight after the initial seven.

Lack of Refrigeration Affects Alcohol Production

FL2504151994 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1404 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] A lack of ice and refrigeration at the distillery of the Jesus Rabi Sugar Mill in Calimete Municipality, Matanzas Province, is destabilizing part of the technological process of production at that mill. Because of the lack of climate control, it is not possible to maintain the stocks necessary to the process. This also negatively affects the quality of the different kinds of alcohol. Factory technicians say the refrigeration problem has been public and under discussion and analysis since January, when the work of that (?factory) began.

This problem has affected industrial efficiency in fermentation as well as the mill's alcohol-producing work group, on whom guaranteeing the quality of the product does not depend. [sentence as heard] The product is a traditional one that has many uses and is also exported.

Haiti

Four Shot in Police Raid on Raboteau

FL2504233694 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Passage within quotation marks in Creole]

[Text] A police raid took place in Raboteau, Gonaives on 15 April. Four or five people were shot during this raid in the slum area of Raboteau. According to a police source, the operation was held to find some unidentified armed people. A witness reports the facts to Clarence Renois:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified witness] "The situation is not at all good for the people in Raboteau. Since last weekend, the people have been dealing with a massacre. For instance, on the night of 17 April to 18 April, the military came into the area because they were looking for a man called Arnault Mtayer, also known as "El Cubano." According to the police, he is armed and leads a small, heavily armed group. They have been searching for these men for a long time in order to arrest them.

"The police want to know from where they get their weapons? Police never got to arrest these men, and innocent people paid for it. Many people were beaten by FRAPH [Revolutionary Front for the Promotion and Progress of Haiti] members who came with the military. Many people were arrested, and on 19 April, the police released some of them after interrogating them. They did not go to court. The people were asked questions, then released between 19 and 20 April.

"On 22 April, while the population was carrying on its daily activities, police arrived in the area. People who

lived near the abattoir [as heard] took to the sea to escape, but even the sea was full of military and heavy weapons."

[Renois] "All of that took place in Raboteau?"

[Witness] "It took place in Raboteau over the past weekend. Some people died. On Saturday, another body was found, making it four people dead. Other corpses might be soon found because many fishermen, who were just returning from fishing, were reportedly shot down by the military, according to people from the area.

"The people have abandoned Raboteau for some other towns near Gonaives. It is a total massacre that the people in Raboteau are facing, with the police searching for Mtayer, also known as 'El Cubano.'"

[Renois] "What do the police accuse those wanted people of doing?"

[Witness] "The police say those people carry weapons. So the police want to arrest them in order to find out where those weapons come from."

[Renois] "What kind of actions did the unidentified armed men take? Are they criminal actions or political acts that they would be involved in?"

[Witness] "I believe that if they were criminal actions. people from the area would have stopped them instead of letting the police search for them. I believe if the people in the area did not stop those armed people, it is because they do not have any problem with the people living in this area." [end recording]

Over 20 Persons Reportedly Killed

PA2504232994 Paris AFP in Spanish 2215 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Excerpts] Port-au-Prince, 25 Apr (AFP)—More than 20 persons were reportedly shot dead last Friday during a police operation in the low-income neighborhood of Raboteau in Gonaives (152 km northwest of Port-au-Prince), according to reports received by AFP. Three bodies were found last Saturday, and some 20 others were found on Sunday and Monday morning.

The bodies, which were in an advanced state of decomposition as they had been in the water and the region's usual heat, were buried so the their exact number is difficult to determine.

The first account made available on Monday morning by the private station Radio Metropole reported that at least four persons were killed but added that the number of victims could be greater because police were firing on fishing boats. [passage omitted]

Numerous frightened residents of Raboteau abandoned the neighborhood and moved to other parts of the city. So far there has been no official confirmation of the incident, the most serious to take place in the provinces recently.

Police Chief Denies Charge of Drug Trafficking

FL2504232394 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] We have talked about the testimony of a former drug dealer who has been questioned by the U.S. Senate and who has implicated members of Haiti's military in drug trafficking, including the chief of Police. The following is Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Michel Francois' defense to those accusations. We read:

On 28 October 1993, I publicly challenged Father Aristide or any of his supporters, foreign or national, to bring just one piece of proof of the existence of any link between myself and illicit drug trafficking. The allegations of drug dealer Gabriel Taboada, in prison for five years now and a witness in the service of U.S. agencies, reveal only two things: a blatant lack of imagination from the silent partners to this accususation which is, according to Beaumarchais, the last resort of cowards. Second point: the unbearable thoughtlessness with which the Haitian case is being treated in the United States. So far as I am concerned, the challenge remains complete.

This was a note from Lt. Col. Michel Francois in reaction to accusations of drug trafficking.

Source Denies Drug Trafficking Charge

FL2604004394 Port-au-Prince Signal FM Radio in French 1030 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] A source close to the Haitian Army denies the accusations brought against Haitian Police Chief Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Michel Francois. According to the charges, the police chief has allegedly supported a lucrative drug trade between Colombia and the United States, through Haiti. Gabriel Taboana, a former Colombian drug trafficker, asserted before the Drug Trafficking and Terrorism Subcommission that he met Michel Francois during a meeting with Pablo Escoblar in (?Colombia). Former Haitian President Prosper Avril also participated in that meeting.

The source, who wishes to remain anonymous, pointed out that Col. Francois' last trip took place in 1981 before... [pauses] after he was commissioned. He went to the United States for proficiency courses in security. Since then, he has never gone abroad. How can Taboana assert that he met Col. Francois in 1984, our source wonders. Remember that upon Col. Francois' return, he was appointed to the Heavy Vehicles Corps of the presidential guard at the National Palace.

Aristide to U.S: Respect Haitian People's Wishes

FL2504232294 Port-au-Prince Signal FM Radio in French 1030 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] To respect the Haitian people is to be careful not to impose on them what they previously rejected. This is a statement by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who asks the Clinton government to respect the wishes of the Haitian people. What over 67 percent of the Haitian

people are demanding today is a total embargo and the return of their president, stated Aristide who pointed out that this decision of the people is supported by Canada, France, and Venezuela.

[Begin Aristide recording] I think Canada, France, and Venezuela have done much to support, for instance, our call for the application of a total embargo. I have not seen this on the part of the United States. I simply wish the United States would exhibit a coherent policy, consisting of listening to and respecting the voice of the Haitian people, through respect for the results of those elections. Today, over 67 percent are demanding the return of the president; and a total embargo, but not the kind of embargo that is a source of suffering. To respect the Haitian people is to agree not to impose what they have rejected. We have rejected this kind of embargo by requesting a total embargo. May the desires of the Haitian people be respected. [end recording]

That was President Jean-Bertrand Aristide asking that the Haitian people's wishes, expressed through the 16 December 1990 elections, be respected.

Peasant Involvement in Fuel Trafficking Analyzed

94CA0100A Port-au-Prince LE NOUVELLISTE in French 23-24 Mar 94 p 3

[Article by Ives Marie Chanel: "The Farmers Are Turning Into 'Gas' Vendors"]

[Text] We are in Anse-a-Pitres, located some 90 km from the southernmost end of the Haitian-Dominican border. To get there, one has to cross Haiti's highest mountain range on trails not fit for motor vehicles, often less than 3 meters wide and occasionally at an altitude of 2,000 meters.

After crossing what is left of the Pine Forest and the Thiotte area, considered the country's leading coffee-producing region, one sees nothing but desolation. The spectacle that greets one's eyes is that of a semidesert region whose people are wallowing in poverty. Since the UN Security Council reimposed the sanctions in November, smuggling and prostitution have gained ground.

Agriculture, once the peasants' principal or even sole source of income, is quickly being replaced by oil products. On a strip of over 30 km, today's peasants are more concerned about buying and reselling "black gold" than they are with working the fields. Furthermore, some of them say quite openly that the dam on the Pedernales that serves Anse-a-Pitres and the Dominican region of the Pedernales is underutilized on the Haitian side.

With no management whatsoever, water from the irrigation system built over a decade ago by Presidents Duvalier and Blanco is unequally distributed and a bag of fertilizer selling for 200 gourdes is out of reach of small farmers. One is forced to conclude that farming in the region today is a rich man's trade.

Robert, a 37-year-old farmer lucky enough to attend school for four years of his life, attributes this situation to the poor crop harvested this year and a tight economic situation that has resulted in an excessive rise in the cost of basic products.

The fuel trade has replaced coffee, for which the last spectacular boom in world prices was around 1975. Every day, peasants from Bannann, Savane Longue, and Anse-a-Pitres transport thousands of liters of fuel from the various supply points in the border area by donkey or on their own backs and haul it to users in the southeastern and western regions of the country, particularly Jacmel and Port-au-Prince.

Haitian merchants in Bannann, Boni, and Savane Longue are served by Dominican traffickers. Haitians cross the border with no problem and get their supply from Kiki, Carlo, or Selom, all Dominicans who in recent years have officially set themselves up as livestock breeders in this very isolated mountainous region.

According to the Haitian peasants, however, the truth is a different matter. In actual fact, these Dominican "livestock breeders" are nothing but traffickers who have been smuggling sugar over the border since about 1985. As in the case of the Haitians from Bannann, fuel has now taken the place of sugar for these Dominican "business tycoons" from the "Banano" region. Kiki, Selom, and Carlo require advance payment from the Hatians on fuel purchases, yet they have not yet delivered fuel paid for in January.

In Anse-a-Pitres, smuggling and the "fuel market" have expanded considerably. An average of 5,000 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel cross the border daily, although this commune of over 13,000 inhabitants does not even have three vehicles! There are depots all over the place, a disaster waiting to happen. Oil products are stored in summary dwellings usually built of wood. Already in early March, two homes were ravaged by a fire caused by improper fuel handling. In the daytime, Haitians and Dominicans transport a limited number of fuel containers by sailboat or on foot.

It is said that surveillance is strict, but by nightfall Dominican soldiers close their eyes and allow products to get through in exchange for a cut of 3 pesos (3.6 gourds) a gallon. Deals are made "in the field" in Haitian territory. At this spot located less than 2 km from the border, Haitian buyers, looking for all the world like lovers on their way to moonlit evening trysts, stand by their containers waiting for Dominican vendors! All night long, dozens of Dominican traffickers from Pedernales come on foot to unload their supply. At the same time, Haitian sailboats transfer their fuel from Dominican boats anchored in the open sea.

In Anse-a-Pitres, business is done in pesos. In recent weeks, Dominican currency has clearly risen in value compared with the Haitian gourde. The rate of exchange has stabilized at 23-24 percent, but the money changers up their rates when they see trucks or boats from the capital or chief

regional towns. Local suppliers of oil products react similarly upon seeing these new-type visitors.

The Dominican traffickers have also learned to calculate, which they demonstrated clearly by deciding on 19 March to stage a strike. Saturday evening, the Haitians futilely protested the unilateral decision, and the pitch was raised a tone by the leaders of the movement and a handful of traffickers who managed to get through the line to market their products despite the strikers' ban.

Armed with sticks and machetes, the Dominican leaders forced the latter to retreat or sell their products at the price set for a Haitian buyer who had deserted his camp. According to one Dominican leader on hand this Saturday evening, the purpose of the movement was to raise the selling price of oil products.

The Dominicans claim that a gallon of gasoline going for 35 pesos (42 gourdes) just before the protest movement should cost 45 or 50 (54 or 60 gourdes), while diesel fuel should be sold for between 35 and 40 pesos.

Dominican smugglers justify their demands by the fact that their profit margin on a gallon of fuel is insignificant because of deductions made by truckers and Dominican soldiers who are among the prime middlemen and/or beneficiaries of the market. Because of the official ban placed on the sale of oil products in containers by the Balaguer Government, small-time Dominican traffickers are forced to pay truckers 27 pesos for a gallon of gasoline that costs 20 at the pump, they say.

The movement, initiated by the Dominicans, seemed to be succeeding by Sunday morning and had a significant impact on the prices paid for oil products in Anse-a-Pitres, considered the main supplier for southeastern Haiti. Boats from Jacmel and Marigot spent hours waiting on Sunday before giving up at noon without ever getting their supply. And yet, they have little choice since waiting is profitable. Once the pie has been split between border runners, soldiers (100 gourdes/drum as the fee between boats), haulers (100 gourdes from Pedernales to Anse-a-Pitres and 520/drum to the capital), the merchants still make a 100-percent profit!

"We have lost everything. The crop was bad and 'gas' is our only sure source of income. But after the embargo is lifted, the people who do not own land or livestock will definitely have no way to make it," said the farmer who acted as our guide. When asked about a possible date on which the embargo would be lifted, Boyer, a young farmer called intelligent by travelers from Port-au-Prince, left it up to God: "God only knows (...); the people say it will be in two years," he said mischievously.

EZLN Communique Lauds Peace Negotiator, Lifts Alert

PA2504171494 Mexico City LA JORNADA in Spanish 22 Apr 94 p 7

[Text of communique issued by the Clandestine Indian Revolutionary Committee-General Command of the Zapatist National Liberation Army in the Chiapas State mountains of southeastern Mexico on 20 April]

[Text] Communique by the Clandestine Indian Revolutionary Committee-General Command (CCRI-GC) of the Zapatist National Liberation Army [EZLN], Mexico.

20 April 1994.
To the people of Mexico:
To all the peoples and governments of the world:
To the national and international media:

Brothers:

The CCRI-GC of the EZLN addresses you to point out the following:
First—The EZLN acknowledges the honest and serious efforts by Manuel Camacho Solis, commissioner for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas, and mediator Bishop Samuel Ruiz to create favorable conditions that may lead to the continuation of the dialogue, the objective of which is to ensure a just and dignified peace. During the past days, the commissioner as well as the mediator have sought to solve several obstacles that block the peace process. The EZLN applauds the genuine disposition of these two Mexicans.

Second—The EZLN applauds the release of several civilians, unfairly charged with being members of our troops, and sees this as a good sign leading to the continuation of the dialogue for a just and dignified peace.

Third—In return, the CCRI-GC of the EZLN hereby orders the partial deactivation of the red alert in effect throughout its territory, and the return of part of its troops to their respective communities and ejidos as of 23 April 1994.

Fourth—If this favorable climate to a dialogue continues, the EZLN will renew the consultation process with its grass roots as soon as possible, at regular intervals and beginning with those less vulnerable territories.

Fifth—The EZLN reiterates its disposition to a true political solution to those just demands that motivates its struggle, and applauds the sincere efforts by the Mexican civilian society as well as all personalities to search for dignified solutions to crucial national problems through reason and not through force.

Continuing with our popular demands for liberty, justice democracy for all Mexicans. Liberty! Justice! Democracy! Respectfully:

[Signed] Clandestine Indian Revolutionary Committee—EZLN General Command. General Headquarters.

[Issued] Southeastern Mexican mountains, Chiapas State, Mexico, [no date as published] April 1994.

Weapons Seized in Merida; Links to Chiapas Probed

PA2604012894 Monterrey EL NORTE (Foreign Edition) in Spanish 22 Apr 94 p 1A

[Report by Teresa Ochoa]

[Text] Merida—Yesterday, members of the 32d Military Zone seized nearly 40 tons of weapons and ammunition. Authorities are investigating to determine whether the weapons are linked to the Chiapas conflict. The soldiers arrived in five vehicles at "The French Courier" gun shop and seized the weapons just before midnight. The store is located on the corner of 60th and 65th streets, just two blocks from the local Government Palace. Although military authorities are keeping a tight lid on the matter, it was learned from unofficial sources that there are several tons and that the load may weigh as much as 40 tons.

Answering questions about the reports, General Antonio Lopez Portillo said the seizure "probably did occur." Major Alberto Larios did not deny that there could be 40 tons of war materiel, and he confirmed there is an ongoing investigation into possible connections between local armories and the Chiapas conflict. "Who said there were 40 tons?" he asked, after denying the general was in, when in fact he was in his office. "That does not concern me. I know nothing of the matter," he said.

Two individuals from Chiapas were arrested two weeks ago while trying to move 3,000 .22 caliber bullets reportedly obtained at the Merida armory. Larios said authorities are investigating possible ties between these men, the armories, and the Zapatist National Liberation Army. The men were trying to load the ammunition at the Merida bus terminal to transport it to their home state. The two men from Chiapas were intoxicated and acting suspiciously, and because of this, Federal Judicial Police were called in.

Suspect in Colosio Murder Released From Prison

PA2504171894 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 25 Apr 94

[From the "Early Morning" newscast]

[Text] In Tijuana, Baja California, Dr. Ernesto G. Mesina, president of the so-called American Union Party, has been released from prison. Mesina is allegedly linked to Mario Aburto Martinez, perpetrator of the Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta murder, which took place one month ago in this border town.

Shortly before his release, members of the Special Prosecutor's Office conducted raids at the residence and office of Dr. Ernesto G, Mesina, who has expressed to local media his pleasure over Colosio's killing. Mesina

also considers Mario Aburto Martinez as a true hero and patriot for the murder. Regarding this topic, Gerardo Segura has filed this report:

[Begin recording] [Segura] Was Mario Aburto a member of this party?

[Mesina] Of course not, but I would be honored if he would have said: Dr. Mesina, I have read your book and the title of one of your articles, and they were the inspiration for my action. It is good this happened because this will allow us to have a fair government. I know people may criticize him a great deal now, but history will acquit him sooner or later.

[Segura] There is talk he maintained contacts with militants of this party and this somehow inspired him to commit the crime. There is talk he held certain meetings here. It is even said he was at this building planning everything before the crime.

[Mesina] Of course not. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Mario Aburto Martinez, but we would have had other meetings in any case. [sentence as heard] I have never met him, but this does not mean I do not admire him for what he did, for his courage. The assertions that this crime was an act of cowardice are not true. [end recording]

Zedillo Offers To Debate PRD, PAN Candidates

PA2604020494 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 25 Apr 94

[From the "Early Morning" newscast]

[Text] Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon, PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] presidential candidate, has formally invited two of his colleagues, PAN [National Action Party] and PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] presidential candidates Diego Fernandez de Zevallos and Cuahutemoc Cardenas, respectively, to a public debate.

[Begin Zedillo recording, in progress] ...agree that the upcoming elections are of special importance for the future of the country. Mexican society demands a strengthened democracy for peace, unity, and justice. Democracy requires legality, impartiality, and transparency in the elections. Democracy also requires the promotion of dialogue and respectful debate among those who aspire to the presidency of the republic.

All the presidential candidates have expressed their willingness to publicly debate ideas and programs. Luis Donaldo Colosio was the first to call for a debate. I have personally reiterated at different campaign rallies my desire to hold a debate.

I trust that throughout the campaign there will be an opportunity to discuss our positions with all candidates from all parties. Therefore, I now respectfully invite Diego Fernandez de Zevallos and Engineer Cuahutemoc Cardenas to discuss as soon as possible and in public our ideas and political programs.

The citizens' demand and the expressed willingness of the contenders make it possible that the debate be held as soon as possible. Therefore, I expect a prompt response from Fernandez de Zevallos and Engineer Cardenas. I propose the debate be carried live by radio and television in a format of unquestionable impartiality, transparency, and fairness. I propose one single broadcast that can be received and transmitted by all radio and television stations that wish to join be used, without favoring any specific enterprise.

In addition, conditions must be established so that representatives of the print media can cover the debate to their full satisfaction. I believe that to make the debate a fair political exercise and fruitful for citizens, the candidates must have equal time to explain their ideas. Additionally, we must have the opportunity to comment on the responses from the other candidates and issue an opening and final statement. A moderator of absolute integrity and recognized impartiality would help candidates adjust to the time allotted.

This would be the first debate among presidential candidates in Mexico's modern history. Holding the debate would give all citizens the opportunity to learn directly about our ideas and programs as well as allow the public a respectful exchange of ideas. Above all else, holding this debate would strengthen our democracy because it would permit voters to compare the different political programs in order to select freely among them.

I am fully confident the debate will make it clear that my party has the best program to secure Mexicans a future of well-being, democracy, and justice. I am fully confident public opinion will be able to confirm that the PRI's candidacy to the presidency of the republic offers the leadership, service experience, and social sensibility required to achieve the progress of Mexico. Many thanks. [end recording]

Finance Secretariat Announces Rules for Branches

PA2504194894 Mexico City EL FINANCIERO in Spanish 22 Apr 94 p 7

[Article by J. Jesus Rangel M.]

[Text] The Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP) has published in the official gazette the rules, 29 reforms outlining method, seven on concept, by which foreign financial institutions may establish branches in the country. These reforms will provide more flexibility, according to interested parties.

Among the benefits, a list of shareholders will no longer be required by those who own at least 1 percent of the shares of a foreign financial institution; instead, it will be demanded of those who own at least 5 percent. An application to open a branch will be considered complete even if it lacks the authorization issued by authorities at

the location where the institution was founded, and its consolidated financial statements will be reduced from five to three years.

Beginning today, requests can be made to establish bank branches, financial corporations with limited objectives, general warehouses, mortgage companies, financial agent companies, exchange houses, stock-trading companies, stock exchange experts, investment corporations, corporations that operate investment corporations, insurance companies, or guarantor institutions in the country.

The SHCP has stated the goal of these measures is to locally increase competition within the Mexican financial system. It has also said a first package for approving the branches will be passed during the second half of the year. The deadline for requests is 31 July.

The rules will apply not only to U.S. and Canadian institutions but to all those anywhere in the world that have branches in any of those two nations.

Among the requirements that must be met is the delivery of a list of the financial institutions and trade and industrial companies in or outside the country in which the company owns more than 10 percent of shares with a right to vote.

The following stand out as some of the most flexible rules:

- The SHCP will ask for a list of shareholders who constitute a controlling group as well as a list of shareholders who hold more than 5 percent of the shares of the foreign institution. In the original draft bill, a list of shareholders who held more than 1 percent of the shares was requested.
- The obligation to deliver forecasts on the amount of capital and assets will be for three years instead of six [number as published], as proposed in the draft bill.
- A copy of the foreign financial institution's latest prospectus on the issuance of its shares and, if applicable, the related corporation will be needed.
- Limits applicable to the branches, in accordance with the corresponding international treaty or agreement, will be based on information provided by the local supervisory commission of the type of branch being dealt with.
- Concerning the sole results of the presentation to which this rule (second transitory) refers, a request will be considered complete whether it has the authorization referred to in various clauses. Concerning the results stemming from a calculation of the time limits referred to in NAFTA Article 1411, when applicable, an authorization and legal opinion must be presented; these are essential for authorizing the corresponding request.

Russian Official Invites Businessmen To Invest

PA2504165894 Monterrey EL NORTE in Spanish 22 Apr 94 p 11A

[Article by Juan Antonio Lara]

[Excerpt] The privatization of 86,000 state-run companies and the opening of foreign trade will make Russia a nation of major trade possibilities for Mexico. Nikolai Zaitzev, a Russian trade official in Mexico, has invited the Monterrey businessmen who attended the 33d Regular Assembly of the National Council of Foreign Trade of the Northeast to invest or trade with his country.

The Russian diplomat said Mexico had exported to Russia during 1993 between $45 million to $50 million, an amount he considered as low. "Besides, the majority of these exports reached Russia via third nations, such as Belgium," he said.

Among the Mexican exports to Russia are steel pipes and cigars, a product which the Monterrey company Cigarrera La Moderna exported last year for $5 million. "Mexico only exports between $5 million and $7 million, a figure which is very low," Zaitzev said. [passage omitted].

El Salvador

President-Elect Calderon Sol Interviewed

PA2504140994 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Telephone interview with President-elect Armando Calderon Sol in San Salvador by Guillermo Rodriguez in Santa Fe de Bogota on 25 April; from the "Caracol's 0600-0900" newscast—live or recorded]

[Text] [Rodriguez] Good morning, Dr. Calderon. Congratulations on your victory.

[Calderon] Thank you very much. Thank you also for Radio Caracol's coverage of these elections and for being present in our country, your efforts to unite the America's, and our brother nations of Colombia and El Salvador. I would like to say that I have become and will continue to be a servant of the Salvadoran people. In addition, I am at the disposal of the Colombian people.

[Rodriguez] Dr. Calderon, are you now extending an olive branch to those who not so long ago were your political rivals?

[Calderon] Yes, I am extending my hand to all the Salvadoran people. I am no longer the presidential candidate but the president of all Salvadorans; those who voted and those who did not vote for me. I have become the president and head of state of El Salvador who is going to work for all Salvadorans, regardless of their political affiliation or ideology. I plan to work for all Salvadorans. In this respect, I also extend my hand and call on all the political sectors that in spite of their positions of genuine and conscientious opposition, to grant me the opportunity to govern El Salvador.

[Rodriguez] Dr. Calderon, since we Colombians are not fortunate enough to know you that well, and we expect to see you shortly in Colombia, briefly tell us something about Armando Calderon Sol.

[Calderon] Armando Calderon Sol is a fighter. A fighter for peace, progress, and liberty in El Salvador. Armando Calderon Sol is a relatively young politician who entered the political scene at an early age as a result of the chaos and anarchy that prevailed in El Salvador. I have been the mayor of San Salvador for two consecutive terms. I was deputy to the National Assembly. I have been a fighter for the defense of liberty in our country. I am a conservative, and I believe that populism and demagoguery have done too much harm to our country as well as to Latin America. Those past populist and demagogue leaders who interfered on so many occasions and believed in socialist solutions only encouraged corruption and discredit to the countries. I believe there is a new ideological rebirth taking place. It is a rebirth of conservative ideas, and it is a rebirth for everyone where liberty prevails. Pragmatism and ideologies have been discarded.

[Rodriguez] There is no doubt Dr. Armando Calderon, that that is how it is. Now we will speak to Armando Calderon Sol, the statesman. What will your first government task be? What does El Salvador most urgently need?

[Calderon] I believe my first task should be to consolidate the state of law, peace, and social harmony. We must ensure social peace. We have been able to silence the weapons; we have accomplished peace in the country, now we need a genuine social peace. To ensure this, we have to assert the state of law in this country and we have to consolidate it. Actions should be directed to this purpose. We must validate our goodwill. We must also improve police performance, and create the conditions of citizens safety all Salvadorans are demanding. We must provide all Salvadorans safety for their lives and property. It is unacceptable for us to come out of political violence and then fall prey to common violence.

[Rodriguez] What is pending in the peace process that your government must meet so the process can have credibility in the eyes of your nation and the international community.

[Calderon Sol] I believe, on our part, there is a great deal of willingness to fulfill the peace agreements. I believe these agreements are [word indistinct]; they are agreements belonging to the whole nation and they must be faithfully kept. The only issue left unresolved is the total and absolute dissolution of the National Police and for the National Civilian Police to be deployed throughout the territory. This is our recently organized constitutional institution that will give security to the citizens nationwide.

We, in our future government, have made a commitment to totally support the National Civilian Police, support its new Police Academy, and as soon as possible dissolve the National Police and have the National Civilian Police operating at full strength.

The other pending issues are some recommendations by the Truth Commission, such as the improvement in Salvadoran justice and the improvement in the administration of justice. We all agree on this, there is national consensus that for Salvador's social peace, for the consolidation of the process, it needs speedy and efficient justice; Salvadoran justice must be improved. In terms of this we have the political willingness to implement constitutional reforms that will bring better and more efficient justice to the Salvadoran people.

[Rodriguez] What type of economic, political, diplomatic, and integration relations are you going to maintain with nations such as the Andean Group?

[Calderon Sol] We want to have very close trade relations with Colombia and the Andean Group. What is more, we would like a true integration of America as a whole. We have this very clear idea in our mind, this very clear idea that you have upheld; that is the Bolivarian idea. We believe that NAFTA has to spread to all

the Americas, and we should struggle for a true economic integration to enter the world's largest world market which is and will be the United States with Canada and Mexico. All the Americas should form a true integration. In this way, all the nations of the Americas, this immortal America, will have true integration, the overcoming of difficulties, and sustained development.

[Rodriguez] The opposition points to you as a right-wing man linked to processes already overcome in El Salvador. What can be done for El Salvador to recover that lost unity so that yesterday's opposition can work, if not in the government, at least to the benefit of El Salvador as a whole.

[Calderon Sol] I believe we have made a great deal of progress. Peace is gaining more ground each day. It is being consolidated; it is being strengthened. Currently, with the political participation in this 20 March historical event, the radical left wing, the left wing that destroyed infrastructure, that caused destruction during the war, finally participated in this political event. It has been able to open the road for its political participation. They won 21 deputy seats in a parliament of 84 deputies. Former commanders, the majority, former commanders of the Salvadoran guerrillas are in our Legislative Assembly.

Meets With Zamora

PA2504201894 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Boris Zelada at the Presidente Hotel in San Salvador; from the "YSU Radio News" newscast—live relay]

[Text] We are at the Presidente Hotel where the Supreme Electoral Tribunal [TSE] vote counting center is located. There was apparently little activity this morning. Nevertheless, President-elect Armando Calderon Sol and Ruben Zamora, the leftist coalition candidate, held a meeting which was attended by TSE magistrates. They also received a delegation led by U.S. Ambassador Alan Flanigan, Mrs. Ann Patterson of the Latin American division of the State Department, and AID officials in the country, with whom they exchanged viewpoints on El Salvador's future, the continuation of economic aid, and other aspects of our country's economic and political situation. At the end of this morning's meeting, Dr. Ruben Zamora spoke to the media about some of the points discussed during the more than two-hour-long meeting here at the Presidente Hotel. Here is an excerpt of his remarks:

[Begin recording] [Zamora] The first step was this conversation we just had. It was a general exploration in which we perhaps insisted more about the issue of electoral reform. This is one of the immediate issues that must be addressed in the next few months. We also discussed other points such as the decentralization of the government, the single registry of citizens, and so forth. I would say that in the next few days we will be announcing the agenda and how this will be done.

[Unidentified reporter] How much is Calderon Sol willing to work on this?

[Zamora] He expressed willingness to work and he agreed with me that in order for the country to move forward, the government and the opposition must agree on such points and work together.

[Reporter] Do you think [words indistinct] and that the opposition, which you make up, is being taken into account?

[Zamora] I think that both for the government and the opposition, these are two elements that are absolutely essential. Today's meeting was due to an initiative taken yesterday. When we talked with Dr. Calderon Sol yesterday he said: Why don't we meet a while? I said fine. That is what we did this morning. We agreed that we will remain in touch to deal with this problem. I think this is part of democracy. There will be a government; there must always be a government, but there must also be an opposition. When there is a government without opposition, there tends to be a dictatorship. A characteristic of democracy is the existence of a government and opposition.

[Reporter] Any commitments [words indistinct]?

[Zamora] This was an initial conversation. The commitment was that we have to structure this agenda of concerted efforts. Some ideas were expressed about how we can do this. But since we have not agreed on this yet, we are going to see how things develop. [end recording]

Jorge Shafik Handal, general coordinator of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN], and other members of the leftist coalition formed by the MNR [National Revolutionary Movement], the Democratic Convergence, and the FMLN, were also present at the meeting. Dr. Armando Calderon Sol remains on the second floor of the hotel, where he is meeting with TSE members to complete some minor details about the documents for his inauguration.

President Cristiani: FMLN Division in Assembly

PA2504202094 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Maria Teresa Fajardo from the "YSU Radio News" newscast]

[Text] Today, President Alfredo Cristiani said one of the priorities of the government of the president elected on 24 April will be to promote the country's social and economic development and to constantly struggle against corruption; this will ensure the continuity of a government under the responsibility of ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance], Cristiani said when expressing his willingness to support and advise Armando Calderon Sol throughout the next five years.

[Begin Cristiani recording] Making a good government is obviously necessary, and a good government must attend to the people's needs. We have made a lot of progress in the political field. The process is practically running itself. In the economic area, the new government must continue to promote development and trust. The macroeconomy has reached a level where this is possible. I believe the most important thing is to continue to stress the importance of helping the people, the social area. Mainly, we must continue to support education, health, housing, and all those programs aimed at solving the people's problems.

The other day, when we were distributing checks at the Reconstruction Secretariat, we said that at the government level plans, very big plans, are made in general terms; because of this, many times the people's needs are overlooked. For the government, these needs may seem very small, but for the people they are very important. Therefore, it is very important for the government to continue supporting institutions, such as the Reconstruction Secretariat, the Social Investment Fund, and the Family Secretariat. Fortunately, the Social Investment Fund is negotiating more loans, and the Inter-American Development Bank seems willing to give this organization a third loan that will help the Social Investment Fund until it can begin making its own money.

I also believe we must constantly work to eradicate corruption. Corruption may not be as common in the United States, but we are constantly hearing of scandals of corruption in developed countries. Japan has had serious problems with corruption. What can we say of Brazil? Therefore, this is something against which we must constantly struggle to ensure its disappearance, but we must not only struggle for corruption to disappear but also so that it will not reappear. Making the same mistake is very easy. [end recording]

President Cristiani explained his earlier statements on the Farabundo Marti National Liberal Front's [FMLN] imminent division in the assembly:

[Begin Cristiani recording] They have kept the FMLN united due to the need to present themselves as a sole political force in the elections, not as a divided force. I do believe, however, everyone here knows there are big differences among the various factions. We do believe division will eventually occur, and each group will adopt a more individual position as was foreseen from the very moment the FMLN registered its charter. They have described themselves as a party of several persuasions. There are five different persuasions within the party, and that is where the problem lies. They will now have to adopt specific positions, and we will now begin to see those differences. I believe five factions will be making separate decisions; this does not mean they will vote together at certain times, but we will see a difference in the way they make their decisions.

I believe the parties that form the coalition will have to make a political analysis for the future. Had the Democratic Convergence run alone in these elections, it would not have done very well. They only won one seat in the assembly. If the coalition breaks up, the Democratic Convergence runs the risk of losing its status of political party because the votes it would receive in an election would not be enough. A similar situation is confronted by the National Revolutionary Movement. If there is a division within the FMLN where the various tendencies separate, we would even see a reorganization within the party. [end recording]

Regarding the abstentions reported during the 24 April elections, President Cristiani expressed regret this is being used to hinder the electoral process, adding this is not something unusual when a runoff is convoked.

ARENA To Encourage Government of National Accord

PA2504205394 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Ernesto Lopez from the "YSU Radio News" newscast]

[Text] The Nationalist Republican Alliance [ARENA] crowned its successes in El Salvador by winning 24 April's presidential elections. During the first round of elections, the party had already ensured control of the assembly as well as a majority in the country's local governments. The party will now be responsible for leading the country through a key phase of economic recovery and consolidation of peace.

With Armando Calderon Sol as president, ARENA has agreed to encourage a government of national accord in order to continue advancing in the process of pacification, democratization, and implementation of an economic adjustment program. It is expected that in addition to macroeconomic stability, the economic program will also ensure an improvement in the standards of living of the 5.6 million Salvadorans.

Calderon Sol was elected 24 April with 68 percent of the votes, as opposed to the 32 percent received by his closest adversary, Democratic Convergence candidate Ruben Zamora. The new president promised to ensure the participation of all forces which support the governability and political stability of the country, which ended a bloody war in 1992 that lasted more than a decade.

With 39 of 84 seats, ARENA will control the Legislative Assembly through a simply majority of 44 seats, as a result of obtaining the support of the right-wing National Conciliation Party, which obtained four seats in the elections.

The former guerrilla group Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN], which won 21 seats during the 20 March parliamentary elections, has stated it believes ARENA will control the legislative branch with

intolerance, despite assurances it is planning to seek an accommodation with all the political parties.

ARENA also secured clear-cut control over the local governments by winning 206 of the 262 municipal offices open to elections. The Christian Democratic Party was able to secure 29 municipal offices; the FMLN won 16, and the Authentic Christian Movement was only able to win one mayoral office.

Monday, Calderon Sol said that with these results, ARENA has further consolidated itself as the country's leading political force. He added its main opposition will now be the FMLN, which has become the second leading political option as a result of its strong showing in the elections.

ARENA was founded in September 1981 by deceased Major Roberto d'aubuisson, who was cited by the Truth Commission as the organizer of the death squads, which assassinated an unspecified number of individuals during the past decade for political reasons.

Calderon Sol To Comply With Peace Accords

PA2604020394 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Apr 94

[From the "YSU Radio News" newscast]

[Text] Today, Salvadoran Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Salaverria said future president Armando Calderon Sol, the winner of the 25 April elections, will comply fully with commitments that remain pending from the peace agreements. The peace agreements, signed two years ago, put an end to the bloody civil war in this Central American nation. In an interview with the media, Salaverria noted that no one can ignore an international agreement involving the international community, represented by the United Nations, because to lie to or ignore the United Nations is a very serious offense. Salaverria added that Calderon Sol has already committed himself to fully comply with any issues pending from the peace agreements signed with the guerrillas.

After declaring himself the winner of the elections on Sunday night, Calderon indicated that his first mission will be to consolidate peace, and in doing so, he will begin a dialogue with the opposition represented by the former guerrilla movement Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, among other political forces.

Calderon Sol also announced that he will travel to New York in May, when he will meet with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali to discuss the peace process and convey his intention of fulfilling the commitments of the peace agreements.

Cristiani Acknowledges Organized Crime

PA2604144394 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 21 Apr 94

[From the "Up-to-Date" newscast]

[Text] President Alfredo Cristiani has acknowledged organized crime is operating to some extent in the country, adding his government is making efforts to combat that social scourge. Cristiani has promised to get to the bottom of this problem by disbanding the gangs, which, according to certain sectors of the nation, operate a vast network in Central America. It appears the administration that will assume power in May will inherit one of the country's most violent social problems: organized criminal gangs.

On 20 April, Cristiani acknowledged the existence of those groups, and he said efforts are being made to eliminate them; no mention was made, however, of what had been achieved so far.

[Begin Cristiani recording] Besides these armed groups, we have the problem of car thefts, which is highly organized. We have been painstakingly following up on the car theft problem. Drug trafficking is another organized crime that has not reached the levels observed in other places. [end recording]

During the news conference, the president also mentioned the status of compliance with the peace agreements, which, according to Cristiani, has made progress. According to the president, his government is making the effort to clear his desk and resolve any pending issues.

[Begin Cristiani recording] As of now, some pending issues concern certain decisions on the deployment of the National Civilian Police and the demobilization of the National Police. We hope that before 31 May, this issue will also be resolved, so that only the specifics, the concept of operations, will be left. [end recording]

Cristiani will leave the Presidency in the coming months, perhaps leaving behind the halfway completed issue of land transfers, an agreement which will be passed to the future president.

Legislative Assembly Approves Labor Code Reforms

PA2304153894 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 22 Apr 94

[From the "YSU Radio News" newscast]

[Text] On Thursday, the Legislative Assembly approved 48 reforms to the Labor Code. The reforms were agreed upon during the recent Forum for Economic and Social Consensus. It also approved the creation of a Higher Council of Labor and the prompt resumption of work at the Forum for Economic and Social Consensus to deal with several pending issues.

Deputies of the Political and Labor and Social Welfare Commissions issued the surprise approvals, which were in turn approved by all political sectors represented at the Assembly. The reforms recognize the existence of trade, business, industrial, and independent contractor unions. The Ministry of Labor will aid in forming these organizations. The unions will be prohibited from denying nonunion workers the right to employment, [forcibly] enrolling such workers in unions, or refusing them the right to resign from unions. There will be penalties for those who violate the code's provisions.

[San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish at 1800 GMT on 22 April reports that the National Peasant-Worker Union, UNOC, expressed its disagreement with some of the reforms. UNOC leaders believe "the Legislative Assembly has taken a step that may not prove very positive for the working class in general." They added that some of the reforms "are detrimental to worker interests." The reforms, they say, were hastily approved to meet "a requirement of the foreign trade authorities of the United States."]

Zamora: MNR Secretary General Resignation 'Treason'

PA2404230594 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1908 GMT 24 Apr 94

[Text] San Salvador, 24 Apr (NOTIMEX)—A MNR [National Revolutionary Movement] spokesperson announced here today that MNR Secretary General Victor Valle has resigned. The spokesperson added that Jorge Pinto, a former member of the party's political commission, assumed Valle's post three days ago.

The MNR, the Democratic Convergence, and the former guerrilla movement Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front make up the leftist coalition participating in the run-off presidential elections that began this morning. The MNR ran by itself in the 20 March elections for deputies and mayors and lost.

Valle said that many obligations, which he did not specify, prompted his resignation.

Today, Ruben Zamora, presidential candidate for the leftist coalition, called Valle's resignation an act of treason and blamed it on the defeat the MNR suffered in the March elections.

None of the candidates of the parties participating in the run-off elections received the required majority in March—half of the total votes cast plus one—to win the presidency. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal convened a second election between the two leading presidential candidates. Thus, Zamora and Armando Calderon Sol, presidential candidate for the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance, are today competing for the presidency for the 1994-99 period.

FMLN Communication Antennas Destroyed

PA2304143894 Paris AFP in Spanish 0002 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] San Salvador, 22 Apr (AFP)—Spokesmen for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] have reported that early this morning unidentified persons dynamited two antennas the organization was going to use for internal communication purposes during the presidential elections scheduled to take place Sunday.

FMLN coordinator Shafik Handal and his aid Marcos Jimenez said during a news conference that "the destruction of the antennas" in the central department of San Vicente, 60 km east of San Salvador, "has put us in a difficult position" for Sunday's elections. The two FMLN leaders also charged that militants of the governing Nationalist Republican Alliance [ARENA] (rightist) have been waging a "dirty war" since Thursday, the day unidentified persons destroyed opposition propaganda posters and distributed "counterfeit propaganda."

This Friday, unidentified persons issued death threats against Francisco Lima, a rich businessman and attorney, who is the vice presidential candidate of the leftist coalition to which the FMLN belongs.

Handal reiterated that the FMLN will participate in Sunday's elections despite these difficulties, because "it has medium- and long-term objectives, and we do not want to give up the contest." The leader urged all Salvadorans to go to the polls. He noted that "it is very important to counterbalance ARENA and defend the rights of the poor."

The FMLN forms part of the alliance that also includes the Democratic Convergence and the National Revolutionary Movement and supports the presidential ticket of Ruben Zamora and Francisco Lima.

Coalition Candidate Receives Death Threat

PA2404045294 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1828 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] San Salvador, 23 Apr (ACAN-EFE)—Today, the Salvadoran left-wing coalition described the death threats against Vice Presidential Candidate Franciso Lima as a "dirty" trick by the ruling ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance] party. Lima, who is 76 years old, said telephone calls had been received over the last few hours warning him of an attack on his home.

Lima and coalition presidential candidate Ruben Zamora said during a news conference that the calls were made to an office of the former Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas and to the home of party coordinator Shafik Handal. The vice presidential hopeful recalled that Jose Maria Mendez, a lawyer friend, was threatened a few months ago with an attack against his wife if he did not help convince Lima to give up his FMLN candidacy.

Lima, an attorney and successful businessman, expressed concern over these events, especially after the police increased his security because "if they are worried, it is only natural that I should be worried; it is me they want to see buried."

Ruben Zamora said that in addition to the threats against Lima, FMLN radio repeaters in San Salvador and the Chinchontepec Volcanoes were sabotaged over the last few days, which "does not contribute to the atmosphere of peace" that should prevail during the elections. Zamora, who is 52 years old, will compete for the presidency for the second time against the ruling ARENA party candidate.

Guatemala

URNG Issues Statement on Noncompliance With Rights Agreement

PA2504155994 Guatemala City EL GRAFICO in Spanish 20 Apr 94 p 61

[Statement issued by the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, URNG, General Command on 19 April; place not given]

[Text] The serious damage from Guatemala's political and social situation in the past few weeks calls for prompt and specific measures. We cannot continue on this level of uncertainty and confusion.

Deeply concerned by the current situation, which endangers the legitimate hopes of the Guatemalan people, hopes that will be dashed by a situation imposed by groups opposed to a political solution and just and democratic peace, and in light of the government's delay in directing and defining its policies, the URNG General Command states to the people of Guatemala and the international community:

Today marks the third week since the solemn signing of the Global Agreement on Human Rights, a historic document intended to have an immediate impact on the country's social and political life if it is seriously implemented.

It is disquieting that, to date, there has been no specific proof of the government's political willingness to implement the agreement. Twenty-one days have passed and the government has not complied with the simplest point in the agreement; that is, to advise the people, through massive multilingual campaigns and the media, of the contents of such an important document.

Quite the contrary has occurred. Instead of carrying out this indispensable, instructional task, the government has undertaken a strong campaign to confuse and misinform the people of the contents of the agreements. The government is spreading misleading facts to try to promote the image that the URNG is disintegrating as a fighting force, something that we have described on several occasions as a dirty trick by the Armed Forces.

Most serious of all is the fact that since the signing of the Global Agreement on Human Rights, there has been a wave of attacks on prominent people that is being condemned by everyone. In addition, intimidation based on threats and charges against people and religious organizations called to play an important role of the Civilian Society Assembly [Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil] in the negotiation process has continued.

All this represents not only a violation of human rights but also a clear disregard for the agreements and an intention to hinder their implementation. It would be very bad to keep silent and not warn of the serious implications this has for the present and future of the country.

Everyone is aware of the destabilization plan to block the negotiation process. It is indispensable to point out that the government's policy to confront this situation is incoherent.

The government's security forces are obligated to clarify these criminal actions. They can do it because they know the origin of the plan and how it operates. The government of the Republic must act firmly, openly, and efficiently toward that end.

It is unacceptable and censurable for the answer to be a display of military force, the presence of which is directed at intimidating the people. Establishing an illegal state of siege will not solve the problems of crime or public insecurity; on the contrary, it will inhibit and hamper the people's ability to express themselves, to protest, and to denounce what is wrong.

For all of the above, the URNG General Command hereby demands:

That the government strictly abide by the General Agreement on Human Rights, without delay in all of its points;

That there be strong action taken against the destabilizing forces to denounce and identify them and to bring them to justice;

That work begin immediately to divulge the complete text of the General Agreement on Human Rights and the commitment agreement to discuss and reach a consensus on the composition, operation, and authority of the Investigation Commission to clarify all human rights violations committed during the country's armed conflict;

That the deployed military forces be withdrawn;

That urgent action be taken to end the intimidation and terror certain sectors of public security organizations are inflicting upon civilian organizations and their leaders, under the cover of anonymity;

That Army organizations cease their campaigns of misinformation and manipulation and that other government officials who are part of the peace process be prohibited from repeating such information.

The URNG calls upon all sectors of society not to be intimidated or inhibited, to speak out loudly against any form of threat or cohesion, and to strongly demand complete fulfillment of the General Agreement on Human Rights.

The URNG calls on the international community to be vigilant, now more than ever, on the fulfillment of the General Agreement on Human Rights at this particularly critical and dangerous moment and to offer the Guatemalan people and their organizations its full support, as they fight their decisive battles at this time.

[Signed] URNG General Command

[Dated] 19 April 1994

Honduras

Deputy Denies Honduras Protects Drug Traffickers

PA2204190494 Tegucigalpa Voz de Honduras Network in Spanish 1145 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Interview with Deputy Carlos Sosa Coello, member of the Congressional Commission on Drug Trafficking, by Raul Valladares in Tegucigalpa; from "The Morning Paper" newscast—live]

[Text] [Valladares] Good morning. We are talking with Deputy Carlos Sosa Coello, a member of the Congressional Commission on Drug Trafficking. What can you tell the Honduran people when once again the country is mentioned in international news dispatches? This time, a former Colombian drug trafficker is saying that drug traffickers are protected in Honduras as well as in other countries. He also mentioned Mexico, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic.

[Sosa] [Words indistinct] at some time some drug trafficker received some type of protection from some authority in Honduras. These types of people frequently appear at the Senate subcommittee headed by Senator John Kerry. Obviously, the more charges they make, the better it will go for them in the future. In 1989, we had a similar experience. We investigated the statement by a witness of Senator Kerry's subcommittee. He was a former Panamanian consul named Jose Blandon. On that occasion, the accusation dealt with the links of some Honduran military chiefs with former Panamanian dictator Noriega and drug trafficking. The accusation was investigated [words indistinct] I was able to testify and confirm to a congressional commission chaired by Carlos Montoya that the trip of a Honduran military intelligence chief to Panama, during which he had some kind of verbal contact with General Noriega, was for the purpose of meeting with some leaders of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, who at that time were in Panama because they did not have the legal status in their country that they now fortunately have.

[Valladares] Who was accused?

[Sosa] No [words indistinct] Honduran military intelligence, whose participation in these types of dealings was not confirmed. Therefore, I do not see why I should mention his name. I personally confirmed that the information was false because by chance I was the one who established contact with the late Guillermo Ungo so that this military intelligence chief would meet with him. Therefore, the trip to Panama and the link with Noriega had nothing to do with drug trafficking. It was a meeting with a Salvadoran guerrilla leader, which is what Guillermo Ungo was at that time. The U.S. Senate subcommittee and Attorney General's Office have the habit of making deals with drug traffickers, who know that the more statements they make, the more benefits they will obtain from the Attorney General's Office and the subcommittee. I am talking about this subcommittee. We experienced this situation with consul Blandon, who made these types of accusations.

The current accusation will have to be verified. I think [words indistinct], will have an opportunity to begin or continue investigations. The first thing will be to confirm whether [Colombian drug trafficker] Taboada, under his real name or alias, legally visited Honduras. Immigration documents will have to be checked for this. Contacts will also have to be made with the Senate subcommittee. I will consult with some of our U.S. friends to see to what extent these accusations involve Honduran authorities and at what level.

What we now have is the fact that our country was mentioned among others, such as Mexico, which in the latest State Department report have been recognized by the U.S. Government for their great efforts against drug trafficking. Now, in this testimony, it said that drug cartels are protected in Mexico. There have always been judges, police chiefs, and officials of attorney general's offices who at some time have been negligent or not done their duty and [words indistinct]. But I think the accusation must be investigated [words indistinct] is not the policy of the Honduran State, and no state organization protects drug cartels. This is an assertion by a witness at a U.S. Senate subcommittee. One does not know whether they are serious. I repeat that in the past we investigated these types of statements by witnesses at Senator Kerry's subcommittee, and we found them groundless. It was much ado about nothing.

Texaco Raises Fuel Prices Twice in Less Than 12 Hours

PA2304173294 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 0341 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] Tegucigalpa, 22 Apr (NOTIMEX)—Fuel prices in Honduras changed twice in less than 12 hours, official sources have reported.

Texaco changed its prices on the morning of 22 April, but in the afternoon it incorporated the changes that had been decided by the three other fuel distributors.

Texaco had set the price of premium gasoline at 10.19 lempiras ($1.40), regular gasoline at 9.57 lempiras ($1.31), and diesel fuel at 7.27 lempiras ($1) a gallon.

Nevertheless, the local enterprise DIPPSA [Petroleum Products Distributor Corporation] and the multinational companies Esso and Shell decided to change their prices effective Saturday.

The new price structure per gallon (3.785 liters) is as follows:

Seller	Fuel Type	Prior Price	New Price	New Price in dollars
Texaco	Premium (in the morning)	10.19	10.26	1.41
	Regular (in the morning)	9.57	9.64	1.32
	Diesel (in the morning)	7.27	7.34	1.00
Esso	Premium	10.10	10.38	1.42
	Regular	9.49	9.77	1.34
	Diesel	7.19	7.44	1.02
DIPPSA	Premium	10.10	10.40	1.43
	Regular	9.49	9.77	1.34
	Diesel	7.19	7.47	1.02
Shell	Premium	10.10	10.46	1.43
	Regular	9.49	9.84	1.35
	Diesel	7.19	7.54	1.03

Economy Ministry authorities have said that starting 23 April, people will have to "learn" to live with these kinds of changes, which will be determined by supply and demand.

Nicaragua

H. Ortega: Agreement Made With Chamorro on Leaving Post

PA2504214294 Paris AFP in Spanish 2104 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] Managua, Apr 25 (AFP)—The controversial Nicaraguan Army Commander General Humberto Ortega, who has held on to military power for more than 14 years, announced this Monday that he has reached an agreement with President Violeta de Chamorro for his separation from his post.

Although he did not give any date for his departure, Ortega made it clear that there is an agreement with the government for his separation, which will be defined in a Military Organization law to be sent to Congress for approval in the coming days.

Ortega, whose separation is demanded by Nicaraguan sectors and the U.S. Government, had up to now been opposed to this "unilateral" decision by President Chamorro, who announced last year that Gen. Ortega would be removed in 1994.

Warns Against Disbanding Army

PA2604012694 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1934 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] Managua, 25 Apr (ACAN-EFE)—In Managua today, General Humberto Ortega, the chief of the Nicaraguan Armed Forces, warned that "if the Army should disappear (in this country), there will be war."

The Sandinist People's Army (EPS), founded in 1979, has been reduced from 84,000 to 14,000 men over the past four years. There are sectors in the country, however, that argue in favor of the complete abolishment of the Armed Forces.

Ortega's warning, according to what political analysts believe, was directed at the Nicaraguan Civic Movement. This group wants Nicaragua to have no army, as in Costa Rica.

Ortega was one of the speakers at a two-day seminar on the relationship between the military and civilians, which was hosted by the National Assembly.

During his speech, Ortega stressed, "There would be total anarchy without an army in Nicaragua." The forum was funded by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (INDI).

"Allow me to tell those who argue the Army should not exist that, if we should disappear, then 10 or 15 armies of the various antagonistic political and economic forces that still have some degree of clout would appear on the scene tomorrow," Ortega said.

The four-star Sandinist general underscored that "with no army, there will be more armies and war in Nicaragua."

"There are sectors in Nicaragua that argue that democracy should mean the complete undoing of the historic changes that occurred in 1979 (when the Sandinists defeated Somoza in an armed conflict).

"Others, namely the ultra-leftists, think democracy should be founded on the revolutionary past, which was necessary at the time, but is long gone," the military leader pointed out.

"We are the local of those who believe that some day there will be no Army," Ortega said, "but when the United States has no Army then Nicaragua will have no Army. That is something we would really like to happen."

Ortega, who has commanded the EPS since its founding, told those present that the Armed Forces collaborated in the seizure of 180,296 weapons of all types during 1992 and 1993. The weapons were in the hands of civilians who contributed to the country's lack of security.

The military leader called for a consensus regarding the "consolidation" and "legalization" of the Army against those who still believe that it is possible to change Nicaragua's history and throw the country into another war.

"The Army is no longer the armed branch of the party, as it was in the past for the Sandinist Front. Nevertheless, it is not going to be an instrument of the other party, and much less the armed branch of the wealthy classes," Ortega warned.

According to the Sandinist general, Nicaragua's main problem is not the relationship between civilians and the military. Instead, it is the backwardness "of a nation that has no democratic experience whatsoever and the conflict between those who want democracy and those who do not."

Ortega insisted that the Army has respected all economic, diplomatic, social, and financial policies that the Violeta Chamorro government has instituted, although some have criticized these policies as "good" and others as "bad."

Other speakers at the first part of the seminar were Nicaraguan Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, National Assembly President Luis Humberto Guzman, and INDI President Kenneth Whollack.

The forum also features experts from the United States, Spain, Portugal, Chile, and Argentina.

Chamorro Returns From Europe; Countries Promise Continued Aid

PA2304140094 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 18 Apr 94 p 4

[Report by Carlos Garcia Castillo]

[Text] President Violeta Chamorro returned yesterday after a tour through the old continent. The Governments of Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg promised to continue their aid to Nicaragua "at least until I leave office," the leader affirmed.

The president signed a letter of intent as an incentive to foreign investment for the Swiss Government. She noted that Nicaragua has become the "focal point" of Swiss foreign aid, which will contribute $3.5 million to the payment balance and technical assistance.

The Nicaraguan leader said that Non-Governmental Organizations will contribute funds for local private banks to finance small business projects, although she did not specify the amount.

Chamorro said that the Netherlands forgave $3 million of the Nicaraguan debt. According to sources within the delegation, there are $15 million still pending. The Netherlands will also support Nicaragua's efforts at the Paris Club next June to renegotiate the rest of its foreign debt, estimated at $10 billion. The president said that the Netherlanders will also contribute $20 million to the San Jacinto geothermal project. They will also assist Nicaragua in marking its border with Costa Rica.

Luxembourg, the last stop on her trip, offered to duplicate its current aid to Nicaragua, which was not specified.

Dona Violeta's trip to the old continent was checkered with "incidents" that did manage to cause certain alarm and delays in the itinerary. When she left the country for Europe aboard the Aeronica plane, she was delayed for two and one-half hours when the flight crew found a strange-looking bag on board. Fearing a bomb, the crew ordered the plane evacuated immediately.

Reports from Miami indicated that Mrs. Chamorro's American Airlines plane was evacuated just before departing, after a small baggage vehicle hit them as they taxied to the runway. Maria Alicia Talavera, assistant director of the president's public relations office, answering a question from BARRICADA, said the collision between the plane and the baggage car caused a scratch under right-side windows four and five.

Foreign Minister Outlines 'Dangers' of NAFTA

PA2604033994 Paris AFP in Spanish 0056 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] Managua, Apr 22 (AFP)—Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Ernesto Leal today outlined the dangers posed to the Central American economy by NAFTA, which was recently signed by the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Speaking before the U.S.-Nicaraguan Chamber of Commerce, Leal said the privileged access of Mexican products to the United States places Central America at a disadvantage. In turn, he urged that "a transition period" of about three years be adopted to allow the region to concentrate on improving competitiveness while it adheres to NAFTA.

The minister recalled that the presidents of the region had met with President Bill Clinton in November 1993 and that they proposed that the region enter the treaty under the same terms received by Mexico. However, he noted that unfavorable conditions in Central America—a postwar economy and a technological lag—prevented the region from advancing at the same pace maintained by more developed countries.

Today, about 50 percent of Central America's exports, which amount to some $4.5 billion, are shipped to U.S. markets.

Castillo Expelled From PNC

94P20675C

[Editorial Report] Managua BARRICADA in Spanish of 9 April 1994 on page 8 reports that Edmundo Castillo has been expelled from the National Conservative Party, PNC, for one year because he does not follow the party line. The article explains that Castillo, who is renowned for his oratory skills in the National Assembly, has a reputation for

being "very independent." Castillo explained that he was expelled because he supported constitutional reforms and because he criticized the party for practicing nepotism and for only representing a single class of society.

Deputies Discuss Constitutional Reforms

94P20675A

[Editorial Report] Managua LA TRIBUNA in Spanish of 10 April 1994 on page 3A reports that Roberto Urroz, president of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, MDN, and Miriam Arguello, coordinator of the committee on partial reforms, view positively the prospects for passing constitutional reform. Urroz said that all assembly factions, except for the center group, favor prohibiting relatives of the president from running for office. However, the center group would not be able to prevent passage of this reform, he said. Urroz explained there is "total agreement" to approve a reform that would prohibit a president from serving two consecutive terms. A former president could, however, run for reelection in alternate terms. Discussion is still under way whether to establish a system of primaries and run-off elections. Urroz said that, once passed, reforms would take place immediately. This means that Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo cannot become a presidential candidate in 1996.

Miriam Arguello agreed that the center group and the National Unity and Reconciliation Bench are the only assembly members opposed to passing the reforms on reelection of the president and electing relatives of the president. The Sandinist Front, in her opinion, is against establishing primaries. Arguello suggested that the Executive Branch would harm the legislative system if reforms passed by the legislature were vetoed.

Increased Fishing Sector Investments Reported

94P20675B

[Editorial Report] Managua LA TRIBUNA in Spanish of 11 April 1994 on page 8B reports that the Nicafish and Pananica enterprises signed a $6.15 million investment agreement with the Ministry of Economy and Development. The two enterprises, which have Panamanian assets, are involved in fishing and processing seafood in San Juan del Sur. According to the article, Pananica will invest $4.15 million to purchase 15 fishing boats and hire 85 employees. The remaining $2 million will be invested by Nicafish, which was recently taken over by the National Corporation of the Public Sector. The article explains that the government hopes seafood exports will range between $40 and $65 million in 1994, compared to $32 million last year.

Commentary Proposes FSLN Principles

94CA0096A Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 24, 25 Mar 94 p 11

[Commentary by Julio Lopez Campos]

[24 March]

[Text] Above and beyond the political stance we take or the economic situation we are in, we Sandinists ought to develop a consensus about the key items on our agenda. As an activist, I therefore suggest:

1. The first major point that we all ought to agree on and the first major political accord that all groups ought to adopt is: the decisions of the Congress must be honored by all. Whether we like them or not. We know that the current makeup of the Congress does completely satisfy anyone. Yet, this is our Congress, and no one ought to leave the party because the results do not satisfy them. We should all stay in the Front so that we can continue to push the positions we hold inside it.

2. Without unity the FSLN [Sandinist National Liberation Front] has no chance of success in the 1996 elections. True, the revolutionary struggle does not end with the next elections. However, winning them, on our own or in an alliance, is decisive, vital, and strategic. Without FSLN unity, any chance of having a policy for victory becomes illusory and nonexistent.

United Amid Diversity

3. At this Congress we must reaffirm the pluralistic nature of Sandinism. United amid diversity must be our conviction. Accepting internal pluralism means that it is not enough to continue being revolutionaries; we will also have to become more democratic. The culture of political tolerance must be developed first in the party and then made compatible with the entire society.

Each force has a legitimate right to seek predominance in the party, but this should not give rise to moves to exclude anyone. Those who wish to leave of their own free will should do so. But exclusion, ostracism, and expulsion cannot be political methods of settling differences.

4. We must all pledge to respect our code of political ethics for debate. A steadfast defense of positions cannot turn into a pretext for political attacks on individuals, factions, or forums. Frank debates yes, personal attacks no. We must give society an example of what we mean by discussion and ideological political debate.

5. The FSLN needs a new identity. There have been many changes in Nicaragua and the world. The FSLN has to define its new revolutionary look in this new stage. The definition of this new content cannot be targeted solely at internal party life.

In defining our new identity, we will also be defining ourselves vis-a-vis society. The new face of Sandinism has to be the appealing face of the nation's leading political force, which can offer and insure peace, stability, the rule of law, social justice, and economic well-being.

Ruling Out the Armed Struggle

6. The FSLN does not give priority, a priori, to any one method of struggle over another. Its policy in this regard ought to be: the efficient combined use of all methods of struggle, excluding only the armed struggle. The priority of one method over another will be determined by the circumstances and peculiarities of the struggle in question. The important thing is to acknowledge the principle of efficiently combining all methods.

7. The FSLN has a preferential social option for the poor, who represent the majority in our nation. An approach that excludes the other social sectors and classes does not follow from this substantive principle, however. A priority means a priority, not exclusivity. The FSLN attaches great importance to all production sectors that are willing to work and invest to rebuild and revive the national economy.

8. We acknowledge the existence of the struggle among interests and classes in society, but we do not conclude, a priori, from this that the national bourgeoisie will be our mortal enemy. Those who are prepared to work for the rule of law with political and economic democracy and social justice will find in Sandinism a serious, responsible interlocutor and a strong ally in opposing the capricious economic policies of the current government, which are crushing producers, merchants, and production in general.

[25 March]

9. The governments of the United States have sponsored interventions against and authoritarian, aggressive regimes in our country. We cannot forget this. Nevertheless, the United States is the most profitable market for the products that a developing Nicaraguan economy would put out. The American people are not and never have been our enemy. We are willing to work consistently to hammer out lasting agreements with the U.S. Government for a new type of relationship based on international law and respect for the sovereignty of the Nicaraguan nation.

10. No sector of Sandinism is calling for the nationalization of the economy or the doctrine of the single party or communism as Sandinism's ideology. What Sandinism opposes uncompromisingly is neoliberalism, as we try to push an alternative economic agenda based on actual conditions in Nicaragua. Accordingly, we Sandinists propose the agenda of the new economic players as a challenge to society.

Just as we respect private property, we demand the progressive right to promote and encourage the democratization of ownership. We promote and encourage all forms of associative, communal, and cooperative ownership, the APT [Workers Ownership Sector], and joint ventures as new elements in an economic democratization that offers an alternative to the voracity of brutal capitalism.

11. We Sandinists acknowledge the existence and legitimacy of individual leaders in our party at all levels. Above and beyond personal merits, these leaderships, which have different degrees and looks, are the fruit of the collective revolutionary struggle of the FSLN. In this regard, our main leader is the people and our party.

Turnover of Leadership

We advocate the efficient turnover of leaders at all levels and the right to recall leaders in accordance with the FSLN's bylaws. However, a true turnover that goes beyond the necessary replacement of individuals means an updating of our program and forms of organization, innovative work methods, and above all, creative methods of struggle.

12. The involvement of women in the struggle of the FSLN has been unquestionable, but their presence in leadership bodies has been stemmed. This situation must be resolved positively at the Congress; in so doing, we will not only be serving justice but also strengthening the Sandinist Front. In regard to this latter point, young people are legitimately demanding their priority place in the Sandinist agenda.

13. We Sandinists cannot remain indifferent to the obvious signs of the renewed outbreak of Somozism. We cannot tolerate any attempt to return to a revanchist, authoritarian, neo-Somozist government. This would represent a return to political instability, and we must call for the broadest alliance to confront this number one enemy of the nation's peace and stability.

14. The Sandinists Front's most important material asset is the property in the hands of individual peasants, cooperative members, retirees, and worker enterprises. The defense of this asset is our main task. Nevertheless, this Congress will have to clarify the status of the party's assets proper once and for all.

15. The FSLN must come out decisively and definitively for the autonomy of the Atlantic Coast and the regulation thereof. The wealth and resources of the coast must benefit those communities first and foremost and must support a regional government that acts to serve this purpose.

16. All of the above will not guarantee renewal unless the FSLN truly begins to play its role as the main opposition party. Consequently, anything that smacks of joint government must disappear quickly and definitively from our political conduct.

Panama

Government Minister Warns of Drug Threat in Darien

PA2604020594 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 20 Apr 94 p A16

[Report by A. Sanchez Belisle]

[Text] If Panama does not take a tough stand against drug traffickers operating along the Colombian border, in the future they will not only grow coca, but also poppy, Government Minister Jacobo Salas told LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA.

"Panama is not only a place where drug trafficking occurs, but also a place where coca plants are grown, and, in the future, if not given the proper attention, poppy fields will also be planted," Minister Salas said after reporting that, in the Darien region, 200 hectares of coca plants were destroyed with herbicides in the latest police operation in March. The official added that every citizen must become aware of the necessity of taking financial steps to equip police with new helicopters to patrol Darien to detect coca plantations.

"The number of police units in Darien must be increased. At the same time, they must be adequately equipped to combat the drug traffickers who use the Darien jungle to grow and process the drug," Salas added.

The government and justice minister believes the Colombian-Panamanian Treaty that is being advanced by both countries not only will define the borders and outline special services for immigration, customs, and drug trafficking, but that it also will help keep Colombian rebels from using Darien as a base.

"I think the danger is alarming, and I hope that with the conclusion of this treaty, which should reach the Legislative Assembly soon, agreements will be formalized that will allow the two countries to join forces to prevent these crimes," Salas added.

He also asked the deputies of the National Assembly's Drug Commission to approve the anti-drug bill as soon as possible. "This bill should be approved because there is not one family in Panama that is exempt from the possibility that one of its members, especially a son or daughter, could have a drug problem," Salas said.

Poll: Blades Gaining on Perez Balladares

PA2604012994 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 25 Apr 94 p 6A

[Article by Juan Luis Batista]

[Text] After the "presidential secret" was disclosed, polls are showing a trend that favors Ruben Blades, while Ernesto Perez Balladares continues to lose ground. A special election poll contracted by LA PRENSA with the Dichter and Neira/Lou Harris consulting firm shows Ernesto Perez Balladares of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) has lost 6 percent, while Ruben Blades of the Papa Egoro Movement has gained 7.5 percent.

The previous poll conducted by the same firm, which was published on 15 April, showed Perez Balladres with 34.5 percent and Blades with 17.3 percent. Now, Perez Balladares has 28.4 percent and Blades has 24.8 percent. Blades is 3.6 percent short of catching up with Perez Balladares.

At the end of March, Perez Balladares had 39.5 percent of the vote, while Blades had 14.4 percent, much less than Ruben Dario Carles, who at that time registered 20.5 percent.

The new poll was conducted between Friday, 22 April and Saturday, 23 April. The poll, which was conducted on an random social cross-section with the participation of 1,209 people who displayed a willingness to vote, surveyed residents living in national territory by way of face-to-face interviews. Of the 1,209 people polled, 696 live in urban areas while 513 live in rural areas.

The specific question asked was: "If the presidential elections were held today, who would you vote for?" The total results in order of preference are as follows: Perez Balladares, 28.4 percent; Blades, 24.8 percent; Carles, 16.2 percent; Mireya Moscoso de Gruber, 14.3 percent; Eduardo Vallarino, 2.3 percent; Samuel Lewis Galindo, 1.4 percent; and Jose Salvador Munoz, 0.2 percent. Meanwhile, the answers of "do not know," "no one," and "no answer" total 12.2 percent.

Another trend observed in the last Dichter & Neira poll is Carles' decline. At the end of March he registered 20.5 percent; in the middle of April, 18.6 percent; and now 16.2 percent. Meanwhile, Moscoso de Gruber, like Blades, is gaining in the polls, albeit at a lower level. At the end of March, she had 10.5 percent, in the middle of April 11.3 percent, and now 14.3 percent.

It can be noted that in Panama Province, Blades has greater acceptance (28.8 percent) than in the rest of the nation (20.1 percent). Meanwhile, Perez Balladares in Panama Province registers 30.5 percent, while in the countryside he registers 26 percent.

Another difference can be seen among the various age groups. Among the younger generation between the ages of 18 and 29, Blades registers 36 percent while Perez Balladares registers 30.2 percent.

After the Video

It should be noted that this is the first LA PRENSA poll after the release of the "presidential secret," a videotape in which the previous regime's "confessions" of corruption appear. In the video, Tomas Altamirano Duque, first vice presidential candidate on the PRD ticket, is shown saying that because there was no money, nationalism had to be touted. Nationalism was the core of the PRD and the military's propaganda machine in the 1989 elections.

In recent days, Altamirano Duque has publicly declared that all governments rob and that he had not participated in business deals with former dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega, not because he did not want to but, rather, because Noriega had not asked him to.

Carles' and Moscoso de Gruber's campaigns have concentrated on attacking the PRD. Meanwhile, Blades has been calling on the people to vote for Papa Egoro in an effort not to continue "this war of insults and accusations over the next five years."

In another turn of events, although the PRD has not changed the substance of its campaign, it has devoted a good portion of its television adds to attacking the president's position. Meanwhile, nearly all of the PRD members who appears in the video have felt compelled to "explain," in one way or another, their participation in the previous regime.

President Guillermo Endara was questioned by various sectors that felt the release of the video comprised direct meddling in partisan politics. Other sectors, however, contend the president acted correctly because, otherwise, he would have become "an accessory after the fact."

After the video was aired, some sectors who opposed the previous military regime called for civic unity aimed at defeating the PRD in the 8 May elections. Nevertheless, up until yesterday, Sunday, nothing specific had been achieved. Meanwhile, the PRD has said the 1994 elections cannot be won with the same arguments used in the 1989 elections.

Taking into account the possibility of an alliance among the civic groups, the last poll posed the following question: "If there were an alliance, and if the only candidates were Blades, Vallarino, Lewis Galindo, and Munoz, who would you vote for?" [sentence as published]

The following is the result: Blades, 38.5 percent; Perez Balladares, 29.8 percent; Vallarino, 7.3 percent; Lewis Galindo, 4.2 percent; Munoz 0.05 percent; do not know, 6.6 percent; no reply, 1.9 percent; and none of them, 11.1 percent.

Now, assuming Ruben Carles and Eduardo Vallarino were not included, when asked the same question, the following results were achieved: Blades, 31.8 percent; Perez Balladares, 29.2 percent; Moscoso de Gruber, 21.4 percent; Lewis Galindo, 3.2 percent; Munoz, 0.3 percent; do not know, 6.2 percent; no reply, 2 percent; and none of them, 5.9 percent.

Struggle Among the Minorities

What all of the polls conducted in the past few days show is that there is a struggle among the four minorities: those who support Ernesto Perez Balladares (United People alliance), those who support Ruben Blades (Papa Egoro), those who support Ruben Dario Carles (Change '94), and those who support Mireya Moscoso de Gruber (Democratic Alliance). The other large group of respondents comprises those who are undecided ("do not know," "no reply," and "none of them"), which totals 12.2 percent.

Over the past weekend, all of the candidates' campaigns staged caravans, rallies, and street celebrations.

In light of the statistics, the 8 May 1994 elections will have two candidates with real chances: Ruben Blades, the composer-singer, and Ernesto Perez Balladares, the businessman.

PRD Candidate's Popularity Falls

PA2504155894 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 24 Apr 94 p 1A

[Report by Nubia Aparicio S.]

[Excerpts] The popularity of Ernesto Perez Balladares, presidential candidate for the PRD [Democratic Revolutionary Party], has declined, while that of Ruben Blades of Papa Egoro Movement [MPE] increased abruptly, according to a special poll conducted by the Dichter and Neira firm.

When asked who they would vote for if the presidential elections were held today, 28.4 percent of those polled said they would vote for the PRD candidate, 24.8 percent for Blades, 16.2 percent for Carles, 14.3 percent for De Gruber, 2.3 percent for Vallarino, 1.4 percent for Lewis Galindo, and 0.2 percent for Munoz.

According to the latest three polls, support for the PRD candidate among voters has been continually declining. Although Perez Balladares remains in the lead with only 3.6 percentage points over Blades, his popularity level continues to decline. According to the latest poll conducted at the national level between 8 and 10 April, Perez Balladares' popularity level was set at 34.5 percent. In this same poll, Blades (third place) registered 17.3 percent of voters' support, Carles (second place) 18.6 percent, and De Gruber (fourth place) 11.3 percent.

This survey is based on a aleatory sample of 1,209 individual interviews administered on a face-to-face basis by the interviewer among residents of the Republic of Panama, age 18 or older. LA PRENSA ordered the survey to be conducted after President Guillermo Endara aired some videos of the previous military regime over a national television network in which the acts of corruption of the military government that remained in power for over two decades were unveiled.

Meanwhile, singer Blades ranked first among voters' preferences in the special poll, when asked who they would vote for in case a civic alliance led by Ruben Carles was formed, while Perez Balladares's popularity for the 8 May election continued to slide. Blades got 30.5 percent of voter support, Perez Balladares obtained 29.5 percent, Carles 23.2 percent, Samuel Lewis Galindo 2.8 percent, and Jose Salvador Munoz 0.5 percent of the preferences. The aforementioned voters were asked: In case there is an alliance and the candidates were only Blades, Perez Balladares, Carles, Lewis Galindo, and Jose Salvador Munoz, who would you vote for?

According to the poll, in case Mireya Moscoso de Gruber led the civic alliance, Blades would remain in the lead with 31.8 percent, Perez Balladares would get 29.2 percent, the Arnulfist Party candidate 21.4 percent, Lewis Galindo 3.2 percent, and Munoz 0.3 percent.

If Eduardo Vallarino presided over said civic alliance, however, the singer would garner 38.5 percent of the vote, Perez Balladares 29.8 percent, the Christian Democratic Party candidate only 7.3 percent, Lewis Galindo 4.2 percent, and Munoz 0.5 percent.

When asked who they would vote for if the elections were held today, 28.4 percent of those polled said they would vote for the PRD candidate, 24.8 percent for Blades, 16.2 percent for Carles, 14.3 percent for De Gruber, 2.3 percent for Vallarino, 1.4 percent for Lewis Galindo, and 0.2 percent for Munoz. [passage omitted]

The margin of error of this survey is 3 percent. The poll was it was conducted 22 and 23 April.

Papa Egoro Movement Rules Out Ties With Past

PA2204180194 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 21 Apr 94

[Report by Alvaro Alvarado; from the "RPC Television News" newscast]

[Text] The Papa Egoro Movement today reiterated its decision not to support any political group linked with the country's past or present. The Papa Egoro Movement bases its political independence on what it considers the crisis in which the country finds itself and which has been generated, in its opinion, by the attitude of the traditional parties that have governed Panama. Raul Leis, secretary general of the movement, maintains that they respect the initiative of some political parties to seek unity.

[Begin Leis recording] We must greet that type of initiative, rather than attack it. We must greet it with respect. It is a democratic, free initiative of the parties. Sincerely, however, we see it as having a very fragile basis, because it is not based on a specific government platform or on a genuine effort at rapprochement, but is rather an anti-effort, a position against another party. The Papa Egoro Movement has always had a position that is not anti anything, but rather a pro-Panama position. [end recording]

Leis ruled out the possibility that the Papa Egoro Movement's position is directed at favoring the PRD, because there is no connection between the two parties. During the news conference, Mariela Arce announced the holding of an event as homage to mother earth, which has been organized by the Papa Egoro Movement for this coming Saturday, 23 April, in Parque Urraca beginning at 1400. This event anticipates the participation of a large number of national groups that will participate with presidential candidate Ruben Blades and his orchestra as well as his government team.

Electoral Tribunal Sets Liquor, Weapons Restrictions

PA2504144394 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 23 Apr 94 p A1

[Report by Esteban Huertas G.]

[Text] A recent investigation carried out by LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA disclosed that the Electoral Tribunal has determined that the sale of all alcoholic beverages and the use of firearms will be prohibited beginning 7 May. By mean of two decrees, the Electoral Tribunal established that all bars, nightclubs, and dance halls are to remain closed as of 1200 on Saturday, 7 May, until 1200 on 9 May. The sale of wine, beer, and other fermented beverages have also been banned during this 72-hour [as published] period.

With respect to the use of firearms, the Electoral Tribunal determined that private citizens are barred from carrying firearms from 8 May until after 9 May, with the exception of the police authorities who by virtue of their responsibilities are required to carry arms. The decree warns that any person caught violating these firearms restrictions will be penalized by having the weapons confiscated and being given fines ranging from 10 to 250 balboas. On the other hand, the Government and Justice Ministry decided to prohibit the importation of all hunting weapons between during the period 31 March and 31 May of the current year.

Individuals violating these decrees will remain in the custody of the National Police until 31 May 1994. These decrees are aimed at ensuring citizen's harmony as well as respect and order for the individual's constitutional rights during the 8 May election process.

Foreign Minister Leads Delegation to Russia

PA2404182494 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 21 Apr 94

[Report by Ciro Ortega from the "RPC Television News" newscast]

[Text] Panamanian Foreign Minister Jose Raul Mulino left this afternoon on an official mission to Moscow, Russia. Mulino is accompanied by Fernando Eleta Almaran, an industrialist and important member of the National Foreign Affairs Council. It is the first time in history that a Panamanian foreign minister is visiting Russia and is an attempt to increase the diplomatic rank between the two nations. Also accompanying Foreign Minister Mulino are Graciela de Eleta, Eloy Alfaro, and Juan Pablo Fabrega. While in the diplomatic lounge at Tocumen International Airport in Panama City, Russian Consul General (Anatoliy Kaskov) said that strengthening ties translates into many benefits for the two countries.

[Begin (Kaskov) recording] Our foreign minister and your foreign minister will sign very important documents that will facilitate our relations. This is why I can

say this is a historic visit in relations between our two countries. I can also say they are going to study every aspect of our relations, including political, economic, and, above all, diplomatic relations. [end recording]

According to Panamanian Foreign Minister Mulino, this working trip to Moscow represents establishing diplomatic relations at the embassy level. Mulino said Flavio Mendez is the Panamanian ambassador to Moscow and now Russia must appoint its ambassador to Panama.

[Begin Mulino recording] We will also discuss immigration issues, the possibilities of establishing cooperation agreements in the struggle against drug trafficking, and trade matters, which I will discuss with the Russian trade minister. There is an essential matter to discuss with the transportation minister, and I have said this in a document I have presented to the consul general in Panama, and that is to get preferential treatment for Panamanian ships arriving in Russian ports. At this time they are being charged a surcharge that makes it difficult for our ships to take advantage of the markets existing in those ports. [end recording]

The visit of the high-ranking delegation to Moscow opens new diplomatic and trade horizons for Panama. Their work in Moscow will be intense and they will be returning to the country in early May.

Argentina

Use of Force Rejected in Falklands Recovery Campaign

PY2504184294 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1726 GMT 24 Apr 94

[Text] Santiago, Chile, 24 Apr (EFE)—The Santiago newspaper EL MERCURIO on 24 April carries remarks by Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister Fernando Petrella in which he totally rules out the use of force to obtain sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands.

Petrella contends that "every solution based on the use of force sooner or later causes problems and grievances." This is why "the war was so bad for Argentina."

Petrella said the war "destroyed the domestic consensus in Argentina and its consequences are there for everyone to see. It also prompted British diplomacy to be much more cautious." Moreover, it caused the British and the Kelpers to mistrust Argentina.

Ruling out the use of force, Petrella notes that it is unethical, it does not offer any solutions, and besides "we value and need relations with the United Kingdom and with Europe, which is practically one and the same thing."

The deputy foreign minister hailed the lifting by United States and Europe of the embargo on the sale of weapons to Argentina. He especially regretted that Great Britain has not yet lifted its embargo, "because a considerable part of Argentine military hardware was traditionally British."

Petrella said Argentina does not need the oil that reportedly exists in the South Atlantic, as "it has huge reserves, while more and more oil fields are being discovered." Argentina intends, however, "to prevent the Malvinas Islands' administration and the United Kingdom from acting unilaterally," as "the legitimacy of any investment would prompt legal problems because it is an area under dispute."

Defense Minister Plays Down Software Theft

PY2504133394 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2025 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Excerpt] Buenos Aires, 22 April (NA)—Defense Minister Oscar Camilion asserted on 22 April that the theft of information on the costs involved in manufacturing the Pampa plane from the Cordoba Materiel Area is not "important." He stated that this "does not affect in the least" Argentina's chances of selling the aircraft to the United States.

In remarks made at the Defense Ministry when asked about the theft that took place at the Cordoba Materiel Area, Camilion noted: "No confidential material, designs, or manufacturing processes have been stolen."

The minister stated moreover that the hard disks stolen from four computers in a Material Area office "have nothing to do with the designs for the plane."

"A truck would be needed to steal them," said Camilion ironically in referring to the designs for the Pampa, a modern trainer.

The minister further stated that the theft—which occurred between 21 and 31 January while personnel from the Materiel Area were on holiday—"does not affect in the least" the Pampa's chances of being the successful bidder at the international bid to take place in the United States on 12 May.

On that date, the U.S. Armed Forces will decide on the purchase of 700 trainer aircraft, the cost of which will range between $5 million and $7 million [figures as received]. Companies from Italy, Brazil, the United States, Germany, and Switzerland will participate in this international bid in addition to Argentina. [passage omitted]

Communist Party Secretary Denies Dissolution Reports

PY2504234894 Buenos Aires LA PRENSA in Spanish 23 Apr 94 p 2

[Text] Communist Party [PC] Secretary General Alejandro Mosquera denied yesterday that the party would be dissolved. Mosquera said the reports were "journalistic interpretations," stressing that "the PC will help the Grand Front to develop, working with others as a group."

The press report saying that the PC would be dissolved and later reappear as a new force within the Grand Front provoked "surprise and indignation" among the party ranks. Mosquera admitted, however, that "an internal proposal was made before 10 April" which sought "to give new life to the party." The bitter infighting within the PC increased following the Grand Front's spectacular growth. The old guard that makes up the current PC leadership has suggested few, very few, figures for the alliance: One example is Attorney Eduardo Barcesat. The candidacy of Patricio Echegaray for the position of secretary general, for instance, was rejected by the other front members.

"The key to the success of the front was to appeal to different political groups. The Grand Front ticket included Communist as well as other party leaders. This plurality was the key to the 10 April election success," Mosquera said. PC leader Horacio Lopez denied they ever considered dissolving the historic PC. He said: "We are witnessing a new maneuver to derail the left at a time the party is consolidating its position as a valid alternative to the social and economic model. The intention is to create uncertainty and confusion among authentic progressive forces, seeking to reduce their real electoral possibilities in 1995." Communist leaders Eduardo

Barcesat and Maria Ines Brasesco were elected as constituent members in the recent election. Their importance within the alliance, however, is minimum.

Senator Romero Feris Announces Candidacy

PY2504151894 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2337 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Excerpt] Buenos Aires, 23 Apr (NA)—Senator Jose Antonio Romero Feris has announced that he is going to run as a candidate in the 1995 presidential elections. He will represent the Autonomous Party and "all those who wish to join the banner of a popular and federalist force."

The Corrientes Province senator, who already had made known his intention of running through the placards that appeared after his victory in that province in the 10 April elections, said that with his candidacy he is seeking "to represent all those who want a true opposition."

Romero Feris will begin his campaign at the national level as soon as his mandate with the Constituent Assembly concludes. [passage omitted]

Small Laboratories Dislike Government Patent Law

PY2504172594 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2020 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] Buenos Aires, 23 Apr (NA)—The organization that groups small- and medium-sized laboratories today maintained that the draft Patents Law relating to medicines that has been submitted by the executive branch "will inexorably lead to uncontrolled price increases of medicines and to a serious deterioration of the sector's industrial activity."

Cooperala, Cooperative of Argentine Laboratories of Medicinal Specialities, says in a communique that the executive branch's draft "reflects the highest aspiration of U.S. multinational laboratories."

It adds: "This is in disagreement with the guidelines agreed upon in this respect by the executive branch in the recently concluded GATT Uruguay Round."

"In the chapter that refers to medicinal patents, the Uruguay Round considerably attenuates the U.S. demands and makes more equitable the rights and obligations of the 119 countries that signed the document," the communique states.

Cooperala admits that "although intellectual property rights are a basic factor for guaranteeing the continuity of individual creativity and industrial progress, our organization understands that the creation of a monopoly to implement this factor is inconceivable."

"We understand that with an adequate percentage of acknowledgement for the inventor, society can benefit from the serious competition of all those industrialists who have adequate capability to develop medicines," the communique concludes.

Bolivia

Foreign Relations Minister Arrives in Bonn

PY2504184494 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1620 GMT 24 Apr 94

[Text] Bonn, 24 Apr (EFE)—Bolivian Foreign Minister Antonio Aranibar Quiroga arrived in Bonn on 24 April. He will spend three days in Germany during which he will sign a financial cooperation agreement worth 650 million marks ($380 million).

Aranibar Quiroga's official agenda will begin on 25 April: He will meet with his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel, Hans-Peter Repnik, secretary of state of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation [title as received], and many businessmen and politicians.

On 26 April he will hold several political meetings, attend a luncheon hosted by the chairman of the Federal Parliament Foreign Relations Committee, hold a news conference, and depart for Berlin.

The Bolivian Foreign Minister will conclude his visit on 27 April in Hamburg where he will meet with Senate Speaker Henning Voscherau. Before departing for Madrid, he will visit the South American German Bank and the Ibero-American Association.

President Confirms Police Action Against Strikers

PY2504173594 La Paz Radio Fides Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] President Sanchez de Lozada last night confirmed the police action against the main group of hunger strikers, and warned that the government will no longer negotiate with the COB [Bolivian Labor Federation] if pressure measures continue.

During a phone conversation with the HATA news agency, Sanchez de Lozada said the government is determined not to negotiate under any form of pressure. We can immediately hold negotiations as proposed by COB leaders but without pressure. He said this shortly after police forces entered COB's La Paz headquarters and took to the police clinic—other report mentions the (Dengel) clinic, which we will confirm in the next few minutes—the six hunger strikers, including the three La Paz teachers led by Wilma Plata.

Sanchez de Lozada said: We adopted this decision because we cannot let them die. This is an intolerable situation and we have the mission to preserve the life and health of the citizens, in keeping with the Constitution.

He said the police action was carried out against the hunger strikers at COB headquarters because they were facing the most critical situation. He added that the government will take a firm stand tonight and will not allow the COB and peasant federation to carry out the roadblocks scheduled to begin on 28 April.

Sanchez de Lozada said: We will not tolerate any roadblocks. We will take firm and responsible actions. He urged workers leaders to give up their intransigent attitude and hold negotiations.

During a news conference in La Paz at 2330 last night, the government confirmed the police operation and issued a communique, the main topics of which are:

1) The six hunger strikers were taken to a local clinic following a judge's order. This measure was adopted to protect their lives.

2) The government as always is willing to continue holding negotiations with the COB in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. To this end all forms of pressure must be lifted.

During the news conference, Social Communications Minister Ernesto Machicado, Justice Minister Rene Blattman, and Labor Minister Reynaldo Peters pointed out that government officials only seek to preserve the citizens' lives and [words indistinct] in Bolivian territory.

Blattman said: The government has termed it absolutely necessary to protect the human being, the health and security of people. We took action in the face of a true emergency situation.

Peters stressed the need to lift all forms of pressure to allow negotiations between the COB and the government. We think COB leaders must reflect and bear in mind higher interests. We can create true conditions for peace in Bolivia only under democracy and with lives placed at the interest of the Republic.

He said the government has no official information on a Catholic Church initiative in the situation.

As for the 27 people arrested during the violent demonstration staged on 22 April, the ministers said they will be placed at the disposal of the court on charges of aggression and robbery.

The ministers stated that this is not a form of pressure. It was adopted to preserve people's security and prevent attacks against their property.

They regretted the COB's demand to release them because a crime must be punished in compliance with the law. They concluded by saying the government is firmly determined to guarantee social peace.

Official: State of Siege Not To Be Implemented

PY2504180694 La Paz Television Nacional Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] According to Fides Press Agency, Minister of the Presidency Carlos Sanchez Berzain reiterated that the government will not implement a state of siege.

COB [Bolivian Labor Federation] Executive Secretary Oscar Salas, however, has asserted that the country already is living under a virtual state of siege taking into account the measures taken so far by the government of the coalition headed by the National Revolutionary Movement.

Brazil

Czech Prime Minister Klaus Views Economics

PY2504214294 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 23 Apr 94 p 21

[Interview with Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus with unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[Text] [O GLOBO] Your privatization program is considered a success. Some analysts nonetheless consider that the situation could change, with the cutting of subsidies to companies. What do you think of this?

[Klaus] The foreign media always state that we have a low unemployment rate because companies continue to receive subsidies. A bankruptcy law, as the West understands it, has existed in our country for more than a year, and the government does not interfere in bankruptcy processes. The low unemployment rate is due to the effort made by companies to reorganize themselves and seek new markets and products.

[O GLOBO] Why didn't the GDP of your country increase last year?

[Klaus] The Czech Republic is completing its radical transformation to create a market economy. One of the inevitable phenomena is the elimination of several activities linked with central planning, which in a market economy cannot survive.

[O GLOBO] What will be the benefits to joining the European Union?

[Klaus] Given that our most important partners are or will be members of the EU, and given our links with a more integrated Europe, our association is essential.

Signs Trade Promotion Accords

PY2604002194 Brasilia Voz do Brasil Network in Portuguese 2200 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Flavio Figueiredo in Brasilia]

[Text] The Brazilian and Czech Governments today signed economic cooperation agreements to expand bilateral relations and promote trade between the two countries.

Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus said that in 1993 Brazilian exports to the Czech Republic totaled $7 million while its imports totaled $5 million. Klaus said these amounts were small following the separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics and the economic reform the Czech Republic has been undergoing.

Under the agreements, the governments of Brazil and the Czech Republic commit themselves to increase trade and

to diversify their export and import items. They also agreed to undertake a joint cooperation effort in the areas of machinery production and professional training.

During his visit to Brazil, Klaus is also conveying to Brazilian officials the experience earned by the Czech Republic in the area of privatization. The Czech Republic has had the most expeditious privatization process in history. As late as 1989 nothing had been privatized in the Czech Republic, but today the private sector already accounts for two-thirds of the country's GDP.

Minister Reacts to Charges of 'Social Dumping'

PY2504184994 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 23 Apr 94 p 19

[Text] Sao Paulo—Foreign Minister Celso Amorim on 22 April reacted to the Argentine Government's proposal of putting a levy on Brazilian exports to compensate for so-called "social dumping," that is, the practice of competitive prices thanks to cheap labor. The foreign minister said the connection between labor standards and trade is a "spurious" matter, in response to Argentine Foreign Minister Domingo Cavallo, who a few months ago accused Brazil of taking advantage of the low salaries paid here to increase its exports and trade surplus with Argentina.

"We cannot allow other countries to impose restrictions on our exports," Amorim said as he attended the fourth ministerial meeting of the Rio Group and EU with the presence of 25 Latin American and European foreign ministers. In defense, Argentine Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella denied that his government intends to put a levy on Brazilian products, but he said the wage difference between the two countries must be reduced.

"The Brazilian economy is undergoing a transformation we consider excellent," he said.

The Argentine proposal is similar to that presented by the United States and France in the last meeting of the GATT Uruguay Round: to link the increase of international trade with the exporting countries' labor and environmental conditions. During the meeting, the rest of the countries managed to avoid mentioning this specific proposal.

"Since the developed countries are living in a recession, there is a proclivity to include clauses that would imply transferring the burden of unemployment to the developing countries," Celso Amorim complained.

Sales to Mercosur up 37.56 Percent in 1993

94SM0319D Sao Paulo GAZETA MERCANTIL in Portuguese 19-21 Mar 94 p 5

[Article by Livia Ferrari: "Sales to Mercosur up 37.56 Percent"]

[Text] Rio de Janeiro—Brazil's trade with the Mercosur (Common Market of the South) countries totaled $8.73 billion in 1993, an increase of 37.56 percent over the $6.35 billion recorded the year before. Those figures represent the total of imports and exports combined.

Putting it another way, Brazil exported goods and services worth a total of $5.4 billion to Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay and imported the equivalent of $3.3 billion from those countries. This means that Mercosur accounted for 14 percent of Brazil's total exports and 13 percent of its total imports last year.

Brazil's trade surplus with Mercosur also rose: to $2.062 billion, or 11.64 percent more than the $1.85 billion recorded in 1992. The increase was due mainly to the flow of trade with Paraguay and Uruguay, since Brazil's surplus with Argentina was down by nearly $300 million to $1.02 billion in 1993. But Brazil's trade surpluses with Paraguay and Uruguay practically doubled from one year to the next, as is shown in the statistics from the Foreign Trade Secretariat (Secex).

Trade With Mercosur ($1,000's F.O.B.)

	1993			1992		
Country	Exports	Imports	Balance	Exports	Imports	Balance
Argentina	3,661,476	2,632,718	1,028,758	3,039,984	1,721,421	1,318,563
Paraguay	960,646	272,636	688,010	543,320	187,403	355,917
Uruguay	774,846	428,657	346,189	514,165	340,771	173,394
Mercosur (A)	5,396,968	3,334,011	2,062,957	4,097,469	2,249,595	1,847,874
Total Brazil (B)	38,704,107	25,695,339	13,008,768	35,792,986	20,554,091	15,238,895
Percentage (A/B)	13.94	12.98	-	11.45	10.94	-

Source: Foreign Trade Secretariat (Secex)

At $910 million, transportation equipment headed the list of Brazilian sales to Argentina last year. Total exports to Argentina were $3.5 billion. Mechanical and electrical machinery and equipment—so-called capital goods—were in second place among Brazilian sales to Argentina at $738 million, an increase of 41 percent over the year before. According to the experts, that result shows how competitive Brazilian industry is in that it increased market shares despite Argentina's elimination of its import duty on capital goods for third countries [sentence as published].

The main item exported to Brazil by Argentina in 1993 was products of plant origin at $828 million. Half of that value represented products of the milling industry, including wheat. The second item on the list of Brazilian imports from Argentina was mineral fuels (petroleum and petroleum products) at a value of $520 million—a fantastic increase of 374 percent over the $110 million worth imported in 1992.

The same statistics also reveal that Brazilian sales to Paraguay rose 76.8 percent in 1993 to a total of $960.6 million. At the same time, Brazilian imports of Paraguayan products increased 45.5 percent to $273 million, the biggest item being textile products (up 41 percent to a total of $161 million). Brazil's biggest exports to Paraguay are electromechanical machinery and equipment at $174 million and food, beverage, and tobacco products at $172.5 million.

Brazilian sales to the Uruguayan market totaled $775 million (an increase of 50.7 percent), the main item being transportation equipment ($198 million). Brazil purchased $428.6 million worth of Uruguayan products in 1993 (up 26 percent), mainly products of plant origin at $152 million.

Admiral: Sale of Enriched Uranium 'Good Deal'

PY2604020594 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 25 Apr 94 p 4

[Text] Brasilia—Admiral Mario Cesar Flores, head of the Strategic Affairs Secretariat [SAE], yesterday characterized as "foolishly absurd" allegations that the sale of Brazilian enriched uranium to the U.S. company Nuexco would endanger the reloading of the Angra-1 nuclear plant. In its latest edition, the magazine ISTOE reports that Nuclear Industries of Brazil (INB) has sold the enriched uranium at a cost of $1.7 million.

Flores said: The transaction will not bring any problems to the Brazilian nuclear program. He added that he would release today all the figures concerning Brazilian uranium reserves.

Flores said he learned about the transaction after the contract had been signed, as INB is empowered to make these sales on its own. He said this was a good deal for INB, as the money it has obtained through this sale will make it possible to reactivate already this year the uranium mine of Pocos de Caldas, in Minas Gerais State.

Regarding the possibility that the Brazilian uranium could be diverted to countries like Iraq, Iran, or India—to make bombs—Flores was even more emphatic.

He said: It would be paranoid to believe that Canada, one of the most active verifiers of the use of nuclear energy, could divert the material. Canada, Flores said, is the ultimate destination of the Brazilian uranium sold to Nuexco.

Ipen Employees Reportedly Contaminated by Radiation

PY2604013394 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 23 Apr 94 p 8

[Text] Sao Paulo—The Sao Paulo State Attorney's Office will investigate charges that 11 members of the Institute for Nuclear and Energy Research (Ipen) in Sao Paulo have been contaminated by radioactive material while working at one of the Ipen laboratories, which is controlled by the National Nuclear Energy Commission (CNEN). The Association of Ipen Employees (Assipen) and the Federal Employees Union in Sao Paulo (Sindisef) have stated that the Ipen employees—five women and six men who operated machinery at the pharmaceuticals laboratory—were contaminated by breathing Iodine- 131.

Ipen employees' representatives have reported that the contamination was detected through tests last month. Assipen Director Claudio Manoel Constancio said that the employees had a hormonal dysfunction in their thyroid glands, and that some of them had nodules and cysts in their glands. According to Constancio, Iodine-131 causes thyroid hyperactivity.

CNEN Radioprotection Director Laercio Vinhas yesterday reported by fax that the thyroid dysfunctions detected in the employees have no relation whatsoever with their work at the laboratory and that this problem is detected in 3 percent of the overall population. Vinhas added that only seven workers, and not 11, have been given sick leave because medical literature does not prohibit people with thyroid dysfunctions from working with iodine mixtures.

The affected employees refused to comment on the issue and, according to the Assipen director, fear retaliation by the company. Constancio said that the CNEN and Ipen have maintained absolute secrecy about the subject. Prosecutors who work for the Job Accidents Division of the Attorney General's Office have already summoned the company's superintendent, Spero Penha Morato, to clarify the situation during a meeting to be held on 2 May.

The employees' representatives want doctors and experts of the Fundacentro, an organization linked to the Labor Ministry that is responsible for controlling workers' health, to examine the Ipen facilities at the Sao Paulo University campus.

New Currency To Be Introduced on 1 July

PY2504223394 Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 24 Apr 94 Section 1 p 4

[Text] Based on the latest data collected by the research institutes, the Finance Ministry has concluded that prices converted into Real Value Units (URV's) rose by 5 percent between March and April. This has prompted the government to implement the real on 1 July.

Finance Minister Rubens Ricupero's team believes the decision to introduce the real in July and to announce its implementation 35 days in advance will give the economic agents more security and reduce price readjustments.

The Finance Ministry attributes the increase in prices after they were converted into URV to entrepreneurs' fear of an eventual price control and of a freeze on the basic foodstuff basket produce.

The inflation in URV has made Ricupero give up the idea of implementing the real on 1 June.

Possibility of Military Intervention Rejected

94SM0319A Belo Horizonte ESTADO DE MINAS in Portuguese 20 Mar 94 p 3

[Article: "Armed Forces General Staff Issues Warning, Demands Compliance With Law"]

[Text] Brasilia—The minister-chief of the Armed Forces General Staff [EMFA], Admiral Arnaldo Leite, warned yesterday that "the Armed Forces are prepared to enforce law and order against any person at all who disobeys the law, even if that person is a judge on the Federal Supreme Court." Leite denied, however, that the military are poised for an institutional confrontation.

"It is not a matter of confrontation; it is a matter of enforcing the law," he said. In his opinion, the fact that the Federal Supreme Court [STF] unanimously voted itself an 11-percent pay increase by moving up the date for converting wages to URV's [real units of value] from the 30th to to 20th means nothing "because there is no sovereign decision which can violate the law."

Anarchy

The suggestion by the minister-chief of the EMFA—and it is supported by other military ministers—is that President Itamar Franco should not release any funds beyond those already provided to anyone who is disobeying the law. "The amount in excess, which in the STF's case is that 11-percent increase, cannot be paid because the executive branch is bound to obey the law, and anyone who does not is subject to arrest," the minister said. "No one can disobey the law, be he a Supreme Court judge, a deputy, a senator, the minister of Army, the chief of the EMFA, or an ordinary government employee," he emphasized.

In the minister's opinion, that kind of attitude on the part of the Supreme Court and of Congress, which overrode the presidential veto limiting the pay of a portion of the civil service, is aimed at destabilizing the plan. "If they do not obey the law, the result will be anarchy, and that is not acceptable," he noted. Arnaldo Leite said that the note released by Planalto Palace on Friday night had the support of the entire cabinet. Although only 13 ministers were present, President Itamar Franco instructed Henrique Hargreaves, chief of the Civilian Household, to notify them all of the note's contents. There was general agreement.

Military Intervention Ruled out

Brasilia—President Itamar Franco will meet with all the military ministers again next Tuesday at a luncheon on board the training ship Brasil, which is beginning its year-long training cruise. In the opinion of Adm. Arnaldo Leite, minister-chief of the EMFA, the president will be applauded by the servicemen because he has shown that the administration is not indifferent to the pay disparity among the three branches of government.

Despite the tone of his statements, the minister maintains that there is no possibility of military intervention in politics. "The country is living in a democracy," he pointed out. "Our action shows only that the Armed Forces are prepared to enforce the law in the manner determined by the president," he added. "Judges interpret the law; they cannot disobey the law," the admiral said heatedly. In his opinion, the branches of government are "distinct, harmonious, and independent," but they must obey a provisional measure. He concluded by saying: "The only people who don't see that are the people who don't want to."

PT Promise To Modernize Armed Forces Detailed

94SM0319B Brasilia CORREIO BRAZILIENSE in Portuguese 13 Mar 94 p 9

[Article by Helio Contreras: "PT Promises To Modernize Armed Forces"; introductory paragraphs in italics as published]

[Text] *The PT [Workers Party] has a plan for the Armed Forces that provides a budget capable of preventing obsolescence in the military institutions and advocates the establishment of a Ministry of Defense following studies involving the participation of admirals and Army and Air Force generals. The plan's author, Colonel Geraldo Cavagnari, told CORREIO BRAZILIENSE yesterday that the Calha Norte program for occupying the Amazon border region and strengthening activities in that area by the government's civilian authorities would continue if the PT's candidate, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, was elected president of the republic in the elections on 3 October.*

The plan for the defense sector was requested of Cavagnari by the PT's Office for Coordination of the Program. It has already been submitted to Lula and will be approved at the party's next national meeting, which will be held in Brasilia in April. The director of the Strategic Studies Group at Unicamp [Campinas State University] says that the portion of the military budget earmarked for modernizing the military institutions will have to total at least 2 percent of GDP [gross domestic product]. Currently, it is 0.6 percent. But he admitted that "everything will depend on the needs of other sectors."

Navy To Defend Entire Coast

The author of the PT's plan for the Armed Forces, Col. Geraldo Cavagnari, calls for modernizing the Navy "to ensure that the Navy has what it needs to operate in defense of the coast." According to Cavagnari, "that modernization process may—eventually—make the Navy really capable of operating in blue water to defend a number of national interests in the South Atlantic."

In Cavagnari's view, "there must be continuity in the Navy's nuclear program so that in the 21st century, it will have nuclear-powered submarines giving it a greater range along the Brazilian coast." The colonel said that "nuclear-powered submarines will be vital if the Navy is to make it difficult for the sea to be used by any country acting contrary to national interests in the vicinity of the Brazilian coast."

In Cavagnari's estimation, nuclear-powered submarines "must be seen as a defense weapon, which is how the Brazilian Navy itself views them, and not as an attack weapon."

The author of the PT's defense proposal also emphasized another submarine-related matter: the submarines must not be armed with ballistic missiles (strategic missiles with a range exceeding 500 kilometers) carrying either conventional or nuclear warheads (payloads), another point on which the Navy agrees.

Army Must Improve Strategy

The essential thing for the Army, according to Col. Cavagnari's evaluation, is "to increase its tactical and strategic mobility." He explained that tactics "involve the speed of movement in a theater of operations and require equipping the Army with armor and helicopters so that it can move faster."

Strategy will enable the Army to reach the area where a defense problem exists in the shortest time possible. To do that, it will have to have the means required for that mobility. Those means can be aircraft as well as transport ships.

Since the financial limitations will probably persist for the next four years, the director of the Strategic Studies Group at Unicamp said that "the ground forces will therefore have to be organized in such a way that they will be located near strategic areas."

Col. Cavagnari said that "although there are no external threats to Brazilian sovereignty in the Amazon Region, military presence in the area is necessary because it constitutes 60 percent of the national territory and is practically unexplored, besides which it has several problems requiring a solution."

The former instructor at the Army Command and Staff School (ECEME), who was also an officer in the Army General Staff's Department of Strategy, said that there must be continuity in reequipping Army units.

Air Force To Get More Aircraft

In Col. Cavagnari's opinion, the Air Force "will have to be in a position to monitor and defend the airspace." Interception capability will continue to be located in the most sensitive areas of the national territory: population centers, industrial centers, and so on. The FAB [Brazilian Air Force] is to receive the entire quota of AMX aircraft called for in the Italian-Brazilian agreement. That number is 54, but the FAB has received only 20 aircraft.

During the four years of the next administration, new aircraft may be acquired to improve the FAB's ability to defend the airspace, a mission it currently performs with Mirages and F-5's acquired in the 1970's. Those two aircraft are no longer produced by France and the United States.

Cavagnari supports continuity in the Brazilian Space Program, which will guarantee "mastery of the technology for strategic medium-range ballistic missiles, among other technological advances." According to the Unicamp strategist, that missile will probably not have a range of more than 1,500 km.

He mentioned the Complete Space Mission, which has already made it possible to launch a satellite, designed by the National Space Research Institute (INPE), for collecting earth data (of ecological interest). Brazil may soon be able to launch satellites using its own Satellite Launch Vehicle (VLS). The INPE satellite was placed in orbit using an American rocket.

Government Guarantees Embraer's $172-Million Debt

PY2604002394 Brasilia Voz do Brasil Network in Portuguese 2200 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Text] President Itamar Franco has signed a provisional measure that empowers the federal government to guarantee a Bank of Brazil $172-million loan to the Brazilian Aeronautics Company [Embraer]. The loan will be used to increase Embraer's capital through the issuance of new regular shares that will be endorsed by the federal government.

Chile

Czech Prime Minister Klaus Views Trade Ties

PY2504213094 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1843 GMT 22 Apr 94

[Text] Santiago, 22 Apr (EFE)—Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus said today that the Czech Republic, which is following the path of economic liberalism, was able to completely change the political and social system because communism and the so-called socialism with a human face "lead nowhere."

A complement to the market economy is an "effective" social policy, said Klaus, who pointed out that regional blocs should not become fortresses that exclude third countries.

Klaus, who arrived for an official visit on 20 April, underlined during a news conference "the enormous results shown by the Chilean economic transformation" and the efforts made toward democracy.

He also expressed the Czech Republic's interest in trade and joint investments in Chile. He noted, however, that some work still remains to be done to eliminate all the obstacles to increasing bilateral trade.

In this regard, he pointed out the need to expedite negotiations for signing an agreement on investment protection, and another for eliminating double taxation.

He said he explained this and other proposals to Chilean President Eduardo Frei and to the economic area ministers with whom he met.

He indicated that he had proposed to Chilean officials "the use of all means" to reach a liberalization of trade relations with the signing of a free trade agreement.

He also proposed the creation of joint commissions, both government and business, to study other bilateral relations possibilities.

Prime Minister Klaus came with a delegation of 70 businessmen, who met with Chilean economic officials in the public and private sectors.

Klaus and Chilean acting Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza signed today a cooperation agreement in the areas of culture, education, and science.

During his stay in Chile, Klaus met with President Frei, the ministers of the economic area, businessmen, Chamber of Deputies President Jorge Schaulsohn, and Supreme Court President Marcos Aburto.

Prime Minister Klaus also gave a lecture in the Diplomatic Academy, and was declared guest of honor in Santiago. He will leave for Brazil today.

Frei Notes Atmosphere of Stability in Country

PY2504192094 Santiago Television Nacional de Chile Imagen Internacional in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Apr 94

[Report by Jose Miguel Alfaro at La Moneda Palace—live]

[Text] President Frei this morning was awarded a prize as a distinguished engineer by the Engineering Institute, of which he has been a member for more than 30 years.

In his speech Frei evaluated his first 40 days in office. After Engineering President Jorge Lopez gave him the prize, Frei said he has been working with a clear sense of the nation since he assumed power:

[Begin recording] Many have assessed the government's achievements in the past 40 days. I think this is legal. They have the right to do so because this is how democracy works. But we are making progress firmly, irrespective of the current disputes. As president of the Republic, I am going to preserve the atmosphere of stability and great consensus that is prevailing, because as long as the agreements are reached, the country and its community are meeting their objectives. [end recording]

Colombia

Gaviria Reacts to Charges of Bowing to U.S.

PA2604021794 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Canal A in Spanish 0003 GMT 26 Apr 94

[From the "Seven O'Clock Newscast"]

[Text] Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff arrived in Santa Fe de Bogota and immediately the hornets nest went wild. His strong statements against President Cesar Gaviria and other government officials forced the president to reply to the controversial judicial official's criticism. Gaviria spoke in terms stronger than the ones Colombians are used to hearing from him.

[Begin recording] [Reporter] What is happening with Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff?

[Gaviria] In terms of our relationship, we have differences of a juridical nature, and we believe some of his decisions have been inappropriate. That is all.

[Reporter] Mr. President, is your government servile?

[Gaviria] Yes, the prosecutor's portrayal of the president was a bit offensive. I regret his use of such brazen language. I will not answer him in similar terms at any time. Colombia is starting to experience difficulties in the United States for statements that, as the prosecutor himself has noted, the president had warned him about.

[Reporter] Skeptically, it has been said that you did not give the prosecutor your full support because you were safeguarding your election to the OAS post.

[Gaviria] I believe the prosecutor has secretly managed to spread this rumor. I believe it is extremely unfair. Ours is a balanced, reasonable position. Our doubts are based on the law, or simply based on what is appropriate. We are not going to abandon our position simply because this type of argument is being raised. In this specific case, I believe we are doing great harm to the country by exploiting these sentiments instead of explaining our decisions.

[Reporter] Has the prosecutor's statement upset you?

[Gaviria] I believe it is in Colombia's best interests that we present a clear and consistent policy on drug trafficking to the international community. This would be good for the country. We want to incorporate the country into the world economy and into world markets. It is

highly desirable that this country have a good image abroad. It is very desirable for Colombians that Colombia have a good image abroad. You can be sure that, despite all the ruckus and confrontation, the country's interests, in the long run, are rooted in this. [end recording]

Prosecutor Gustavo de Greiff stated in a communique issued today, that, during his stay in the United States he denied to the media that he had offered pardons to drug traffickers. Prosecutor General de Greiff also said judicial cooperation could not be accepted if it was conditioned on having to hold prior consultations on the decision to use certain evidence with a country that supplied such evidence—in this case, the United States. The prosecutor also urged U.S. authorities to stop their unjustified attacks on Colombian officials, especially him. He called on the U.S. Government to continue cooperating by exchanging evidence to further the struggle to end the worldwide scourge of drug trafficking.

Ecuador

Roundup of Economic Developments

PA1204203594

[Editorial Report] The following is a compilation of reports on economic developments through 19 April.

Finance Minister Cesar Robalino announced on 5 April that the government signed a letter of intent with the IMF according to which Ecuador agreed to reduce inflation to 20 percent by the end of 1994 and cut the fiscal deficit to 0.5 percent of GNP. The agreements are directed at renegotiating the county's $12.6-billion foreign debt and seeking new loans. (Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1844 GMT 5 Apr 94)

The Defense Ministry announced that routes and frequencies currently belonging to Ecuatoriana de Aviacion were ceded to several other companies on a temporary basis. Defense Minister Jose Gallardo said that "once the inactive airline resumes operations, the beneficiaries will relinquish the routes." (Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 5 Apr 94)

A recent government report states that foreign reserves increased 4.39 percent in March over the previous month. Reserves now total $1.331 billion. According to a Central Bank official, this represents an influx of $56 million. The official said that there is increased confidence in Ecuador's economic future following the recent implementation of government measures. (Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 11 Apr 94)

Ecuador's international monetary reserves set a new internal record in March by totaling $1.3 billion, the 15th best registration since 13 years ago when the economic indicator totaled $563 million. (Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 12 Apr 94)

Paraguay

Wasmosy Issues Message on General Strike

PY2504215894 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 25 Apr 94 p 1D

["Text" of President Juan Carlos Wasmosy's speech to the nation broadcast on 24 April]

[Text] "Fellow-countrymen: When I acceded to the presidency, I set out to improve the economic situation of the country, to increase levels of employment and wages, and to implement a more equitable distribution of wealth. These were, and continue to be, my objectives and I will continue to battle for them throughout my tenure.

"I was aware that I was the first civilian president in many decades. I therefore sought to govern with the deepest respect for all individual and political liberties and to enhance the freedom of the press as an essential channel for democracy. Likewise, I was conscious of the great responsibility I assumed before my fellow-countrymen, especially those who did not vote for me but who also contributed toward the democracy that we at present enjoy. We must consolidate our democratic system if we are to derive the benefits we admire in countries that embarked on this path before us.

"In compliance with this line of action, I have favored dialogue and negotiation as a way to definitely overcome conflicts and problems. This is why I hold daily talks with all social, economic, and political sectors in our country. This is why I frequently travel the length and breath of our country—to be in direct contact with my fellow-countrymen, to understand their needs, and to explain the restrictions imposed by our reality.

"I believe the great majority of our government officials and the people at large share this spirit with us. Sometimes our temperament, our grievances, our culture, and our anxiety play nasty tricks on us and we go against those purposes. It is then that we lose our patience and engage in verbal battles in which we try to discredit each other. This contributes to bring things to a head. It encourages drastic solutions, unilateral positions, and a pessimistic outlook on the future which is not in keeping with our reality and which, to a certain extent, takes us back to the past; a past that we want to overcome but which binds us to an authoritarian culture in which we believe—either individually or as a group—that we are absolutely right and are entitled to every single right. Therefore, we need not heed those who think differently.

"Under a dictatorial regime, disagreements like this do not prosper for the simple reason that nobody can voice his/her opinion. Everyone can speak in democracy, but if we do so in an authoritarian way we cause unending disputes and irreconcilable stances which lead to impasse and frustration. Handled incorrectly we could

end up in a state of anarchy, against which we must fight with the same vigor we exhibited when we overthrew the dictatorship.

"Within this framework of learning how to move from tyranny to republican participation, I would like to make some reflections on the planned 2 May strike. The right to strike is enshrined in our Constitution and will be scrupulously respected and zealously protected. The right to strike is one thing but it is quite another thing to analyze whether or not it is timely.

"To obtain higher wages and create more jobs in our country—which was isolated from the rest of the world and whose best-known industry was, sad to say, corruption—we must build a level of credibility that will help us obtain the investments required to support the better pay and employment levels I have just mentioned. We must reduce inflation and thus avoid the painful learning process experienced by our neighbors, who were forced to coexist for decades with rampant inflation, which like any addiction, undermines social efforts and generates the worst injustices to the humblest strata of society, eating into their salaries every month as it reduces their purchasing power.

"Inflation leaves no room to build a truly better future. I want to be very clear on this point, as long as I am president of all Paraguayans, I will never propound demagogic measures that will compromise and mortgage the future of our country. For these reasons I believe the announced strike will not help us, Paraguayans, to better our situation. We also believe the direct action methodology of this struggle is incorrect, seeking to oil the wheels of a sometimes difficult social coexistence because direct action damages bonds that exist between those who will have to negotiate at a future date. This happens simply because there is no other way of reaching agreement.

"In my capacity as president and as a Paraguayan, I want to sit at the negotiating table to discuss things, to rationally meet our priority needs, and to reach consensus on some of our expectations and on our outlook on reality. If we do not do this, we will continue with this tug of war from our respective positions and will not attain our objectives, less still in the short term. Errors bring about damage, but they usually are a most precious source of learning.

"I am convinced this strike is a mistake. I am sure it is a grave mistake. Yet if it helps Paraguay to learn, it is worth a try. I am sure it will be more beneficial for all concerned if we continue our talks before the strike.

"If we cannot do that, as far as I am concerned, the negotiating table and the offer to talk continue open after the strike. I will do my best and I promise the best effort by the government to continue to build, with anyone who wants to participate, the best Paraguay possible. I wish you the best."

Peasants To Join 2 May General Strike

PY2104192694 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 21 Apr 94 p 94

[Article by correspondent Noelia Villalba in Yataity del Norte, San Pedro Department]

[Text] Yesterday during a meeting in Yataity del Norte, peasant leaders from the entire country decided to join a nationwide strike scheduled for 2 May. The peasants will reportedly stage marches and block roads throughout the interior of the country.

During their six-hour meeting, about 20 peasant leaders from all the national peasant organizations decided to join a general strike called by the United Workers Trade Union, the Paraguayan Confederation of Workers, and the National Workers Federation for 2 May.

Peasants from the interior of the country will join the general strike to express their rejection of the government's neoliberal policy, their repudiation of corruption and social injustices, and their support for peasant demands.

The peasants will express their solidarity with a great rally sponsored by the National Peasant Organization (ONAC). The rally will be staged at the Heroes Square in the town of Coronel Oviedo. The peasants will march from Heroes Square to the international highway intersection at Coronel Oviedo where they will decide whether to block the crossroads there.

Other roads in various parts of the country will also be blocked. The Coordinating Board of Landless People [Coordinacion de Sin Tierras] will block roads in the towns of Union, Maria Auxiliadora, and Sanguina Cue. The peasants organizations in San Pedro will block traffic in Tacuara. The Paraguayan Peasant Movement branch in Limoy will block the "superhighway" at 10 points. The Chaco Communities Coordinating Board [Coordinacion Intercomunitaria del Chaco] will block traffic on the Transchaco Highway. Local peasant organizations will stage another rally at the 234 Square in Curuguaty.

After long discussions, the peasant commission that is participating in negotiations with the Social Development Council decided to walk out because problems are not being solved. Estanislao Martinez, a peasants coordinator, explained: "We walked out of the negotiations with the government because the government officials asked us not to implement any pressure measures and because the government refused to respond to our petition for compensation for the bad quality seeds distributed among peasants." Another point raised by the peasants to support their walk out from the negotiations involved the incorrect management of 3.8 billion guaranies that Paraguayan Cotton Chamber made available to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to resolve peasants problems.

Finally, it was decided to ask the appropriate government officials to clearly determine how Esteban Balbuena, the National Peasant Federation (FNC) Environment and Ecology secretary, died. Balbuena was found dead on 19 April in Itapua Department. He was in a pickup truck with a bullet lodged in his body.

Central Bank Views Money Laundering Agreement

PY2504223094 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 23 Apr 94 p 6

[Text] Paraguayan Central Bank [BCP] President Jacinto Estigarribia and members of the BCP board of directors have met with members of the Senate's Constitutional Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees to examine the text of the agreement on the laundering of drug trafficking money which was signed by our government and the U.S. Government.

The agreement reflects the BCP's position establishing that the parties directly involved are the U.S. Treasury Department, the BCP, and the Paraguayan Finance Ministry. The agreement also establishes that the BCP will be responsible for providing information whenever required on foreign exchange operations, either because there is suspicion something irregular has occurred or because the case is under investigation in both countries.

The president of the BCP said the bank is already implementing controls on foreign exchange operations. "Commercial banks and foreign exchange companies regularly provide information on all operations over $10,000 to the Banks Superintendency. The list includes the name of the person purchasing or selling those dollars, his address, and his identity card number. That information is currently available at the Banks Superintendency," Estigarribia explained. The agreement says this is precisely the type of information the parties are committed to provide if there is a concrete request or if there are doubts on certain operations.

Peru

Colombian Foreign Minister Promotes Integration

PY2604124894 Lima Global de Television Network in Spanish 0130 GMT 26 Apr 94

[Text] Starting her official visit to Peru, Colombian Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin de Rubio today met Foreign Minister Efrain Goldenberg. She later met President Fujimori at Government House.

[Begin recording] [First unidentified reporter] During the first day of her official visit to Peru, Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin de Rubio met at the Foreign Ministry building with her Peruvian colleague, Efrain Goldenberg.

From the Foreign Ministry building, Rubio walked to San Pedro church, located a few meters from the Foreign Ministry building. The Colombian foreign minister toured the church and closely observed each of the tableaux and paintings dating from Spanish colonial times that are meticulously kept in the church.

Afterward, Sanin de Rubio went to Government House, where she held a protocol meeting with President Fujimori with the objective of strengthening bilateral ties.

Before leaving Government House, she observed the traditional changing of the guard conducted by the Junin guard detachment at the Honor Patio.

[Second unidentified reporter] In the afternoon, Colombian Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin de Rubio left the Foreign Ministry building to place a wreath at the Simon Bolivar monument at Congress Plaza.

[Noemi Sanin de Rubio] We will install the neighborhood committees [comisiones de vencidad]. We will hold meetings and meet with the media. With President Fujimori, we will open a new school. We strive to achieve integration not only at the government level but also at all social levels. [end recording]

Sanin on Upgrading Anti-Drug Struggle

PY2604142694 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0229 GMT 26 Apr 94

[Excerpt] Lima, 25 Apr (EFE)—Colombian Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin de Rubio announced in Lima today that Colombia and Peru will step up the joint struggle against drug trafficking.

The Colombian minister, who is paying an official visit to Peru, said cooperation between the two countries in this field will be increased through the signing of new agreements.

In comments to the media, she said there is "great cooperation" between Colombia and Peru in the anti-drug field.

Sanin de Rubio commented that cooperation in the struggle against drug trafficking also includes the legal aspects, and disclosed that she had made a proposal in this regard to her Peruvian counterpart that will be assessed.

The visiting minister said Peru and Colombia are engaged in the struggle against drug trafficking and that they need each other, as well as the international community's cooperation because this problem cannot be fought alone.

Sanin arrived in Lima on 23 April. On 24 April, she visited Cusco, where an indigenous Inca empire's capital is located, and the Inca citadel of Machupicchu. [passage omitted]

General Questions Red Cross 'Meddling'

PY2504203194 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2041 GMT 24 Apr 94

[Text] Lima, 24 Apr (EFE)—Today General Alfredo Rodriguez labeled as "impertinent" the attitude of the International Red Cross in areas of conflict, adding that Red Cross meddling in the region where the military have launched a counterterrorist offensive is jeopardizing operations.

Gen. Rodriguez, who is leading the counterterrorist offensive launched against the Shining Path on 5 April in the jungle area of Leoncio Prado Province, explained that the Army has been supplying local information to the Red Cross, but "we have detected certain things that don't seem to be quite all right."

As an example of such things, the general wondered how the International Red Cross knew where the troops would go in.

"I am not making any charges, because I have no hard evidence, but they do go in, they talk to subversive leaders, and come back with information," Gen. Rodriguez said, according to local Sunday newspapers.

The general made this statement to the Congressional Human Rights Committee and to Attorney General Blanca Nelida Colan in Tingo Maria, capital of Leoncio Prado Province, where the offensive is taking place.

Rodriguez added that according to his sources, International Red Cross personnel ask Shining Path militants whether their leaders have talked to them about the Red Cross, and whether they have told them that "we can help you."

Rodriguez indicated that information was being "distorted" with a view to make the Army appear to be the "bad guys," adding that the International Red Cross should "redesign its policy."

He also objected to the International Red Cross attitude toward arrested Shining Path members who are brought in for questioning. According to the general, Red Cross personnel insist on being allowed to talk to them as soon as they are arrested, without waiting for the 15-day period legally allotted for the investigation.

The general explained that although the invitation to the Red Cross to visit the area of conflict in Leoncio Prado is still open, Army patrols will have to accompany Red Cross personnel because the place is dangerous.

Attorney General: No Evidence of Army 'Outrages'

PY2504184894 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0144 GMT 24 Apr 94

[Text] Lima, 23 Apr (EFE)—Attorney General Nelida Blanca Colan stated on 23 April that there is no evidence that the Peruvian Army "commited outrages" during the antisubversive operation that has been under way in Peru's northern jungle since 5 April.

The attorney general, the Congressional Human Rights Committee, and representatives of the Council for Peace and the National Coordinating Board for Human Rights arrived at the theater of operations today.

The Army is trying to eliminate Shining Path columns in Leoncio Prado Province, on the left bank of the Huallaga River in the northern Peruvian department of Huanuco.

The visitors boarded helicopters and overflew Venenillo, Moyuna, and Mohena, villages where the National Coordinating Board for Human Rights and certain news media claimed that Army helicopters had fired rockets at civilians, leaving an unspecified number of casualties.

Carlos Blanco, chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Committee, reported that the theater of military operations has been reconnoitered, and testimonies of the reported outrages will now be gathered.

Blanco belongs to the ruling party majority in Congress. He said: "We will stay here as long as necessary to gather all the necessary testimonies."

Appearance of New Shining Path Code Name Discussed

PY2504215594 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1451 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Text] Lima, 23 Apr (EFE)—It appears that "Ricardo Z" has become the new leader of Peru's Maoist gang Shining Path [SL] after ousting Oscar Alberto Ramirez, known as "Feliciano." So far, Peruvian intelligence services have been unable to establish the real identity of "Ricardo Z."

According to sources in the intelligence services, it seems that after Abimael Guzman was arrested, almost a year and a half ago, "Ricardo Z" stepped into the shoes of SL's imprisoned founder and main ideologist.

Many analysts have reported that "Ricardo Z" could be one of the four SL leaders still at large, including Julio Cesar Mezzich, known as "El Doctorcito" ["the little doctor"], and Teresa Durand.

They do not rule out the possibility that second-level SL leaders may have ousted their superiors, or that "Feliciano"—who took over after Guzman was arrested on 12 September 1992—is now calling himself "Ricardo Z."

The Lima daily EXPRESO quoted the National Counterterrorism Directorate (Dincote) as stating that Ramirez could have changed his alias to evade security forces, which according to military sources are on his tracks in the mountains of Ayacucho Department.

Dincote claims that "Ramirez has changed his alias to avoid an impending arrest." The same source indicated that another SL leader could have taken the alias "Feliciano."

The news media also speculate that "Ricardo Z" could well be a leader of Colombian drug traffickers who are afraid of losing coca plantations in the Peruvian jungle, which they control with SL's help.

"Ricardo Z" could also be a SL military leader who has staged a "coup d'etat" against the organization's high command.

Former Deputy Alberto Valencia, an expert in subversion, told EXPRESO that he is under the impression that Teresa Durand, known as "the strongest military commander," could be calling herself "Ricardo Z."

Valencia does not believe that Ramirez could be "Ricardo Z," although he did say that Ramirez had been entrusted with organizing the SL "people's guerrilla army." According to Valencia "neither could Mezzich be 'Ricardo Z,' as he has lost power and is looked upon as an upstart."

All the experts agree that security forces are bound to defeat the SL, which has been going downhill since Guzman and 90 percent of the SL high command were arrested in September 1992.

A military offensive is currently under way in Leoncio Prado, a jungle province of Huanuco Department, Peru's central mountain region. The objective of this offensive is to eliminate SL columns which are operating in the area, because these columns appear to be the strongest force SL has left.

Various circles have criticized "Operation Aries," and there are witnesses who claim that the military have used helicopters to bomb civilians who are fleeing from the area.

Fujimori: Old Rules Guarantee Clean Elections

PY2504180194 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1709 GMT 23 Apr 94

[Excerpts] Lima, 23 Apr (EFE)—Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori asserted that now that Congress has approved the proposal that the National Elections Board (JNE) organize the elections, nobody can suspect any fraud. [passage omitted]

Fujimori on 22 April told journalists in Arequipa, 1,000 km south of Lima, that with this decision "now absolutely nobody can question the clear and transparent development of the electoral process."

He added that reports stating that "the government upheld electoral fraud" have thus been dismissed, and said the executive branch will not have any problem promulgating the law approved by Congress.

Fujimori indirectly referred to the possible presidential candidacy of former UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar by stating: "The road is clear and nobody can condition his candidacy to the establishment of clear and clean rules." [passage omitted]

Roundup of Insurgent Activities

PY2304033094

[Editorial Report] The following is a compilation of reports on insurgent activities compiled from Peruvian media monitored through 22 April.

On 28 March, Shining Path, SL, "terrorists" bombed two high- tension pylons in Los Olivos and Santa Anita Districts, two Credit Bank branches in La Victoria and Caqueta Districts, and a Latino Bank branch in San Martin de Porres District in Lima. The most serious attacks were against the buildings of the recently auctioned National Telecommunications Enterprise of Peru, Entel Peru, and the Peruvian Telephone Company, CPT. On 29 March, a bomb explosion in an Entel Peru building in downtown Lima injured four people. (Lima CARETAS in Spanish 31 Mar 94 p 20)

Counterterrorism Directorate, Dincote, personnel arrested four other members of the gang that killed General Julio Nino Rios, former director of the defunct Peruvian Republican Guard. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 4 Apr 94 p A17)

Seven Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, MRTA, "terrorists" were presented to the press at the Fifth Infantry Division unit in El Milagro District, in the Amazon province of Bagua. They were arrested in Jaen, Bagua, and Utcubamba Provinces in the past few weeks. (Lima EL COMERCIO in Spanish 7 Apr 94 p A15)

Peasant Defense Patrol leader Eulogio Salvatierra Landeo reported that the SL holds 5,000 Ashaninka Indians captive in the Ene, Perene, and Tambo Valleys, Junin Department. The Mantaro Front chief, General David Jaime Sobrevilla, said between 2,000 and 3,000 Ashaninkas were rescued in the past two years. (Lima EL COMERCIO in Spanish 7 Apr 94 p A15)

On 30 March, four SL "terrorists" dynamited the Yompian mall in Lima. The explosion caused damage but no injuries. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 31 Mar 94 p A14)

MRTA regional leader Juan Antonio Leon Montero, aka Perseo, told Dincote that the Chilean "terrorist" known as Comrade Rodrigo, along with other Peruvian and Chilean "terrorists," lead the so-called MRTA Guerrilla Center Front that operates in Junin, Pasco, and Huancavelica Departments. Rodrigo was involved in the attacks against the Government Palace in 1993 and the Army general headquarters in 1992. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 31 Mar 94 p A15)

The Apurimac Political-Military Command presented three repentant SL members at the Army base in Bolognesi, Apurimac Department. They were arrested in the township of Anizo with a large quantity of "subversive" propaganda, weapons, and ammunition. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 1 Apr 94 p A14)

Dincote agents arrested 10 members of a SL faction lead by Oscar Ramirez Durand, aka Feliciano, during a raid of a house in Lima. A repentant SL member provided the information that led to their capture. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 1 Apr 94 p A14)

The Police and Armed Forces Joint Command reported that they captured 7,667 MRTA and SL "subversives" from June 1992 to February 1994, compared with the previous 12 years when only 5,403 "terrorists" were arrested. More than 4,000 "subversives" have surrendered and 1,104 have been indicted since the Repentance Law was enforced in May 1992. (Lima EL PERUANO in Spanish 6 Apr 94 p 10)

The Army and National Police captured 13 SL and MRTA "terrorists" during operations in Ancash and Amazonas Provinces. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 8 Apr 94 p A17)

A large quantity of weapons and 19 "terrorists" were presented to General Hermoza Rios, chairman of Armed Forces Joint Command in Tingo Maria. (Lima EL COMERCIO in Spanish 9 Apr 94 p A12)

On 11 April, Dincote agents raided a house in El Callao, where they arrested five SL "terrorists," and seized weapons, fliers, and other documents on recent actions. National Police sources reported that members of the so-called SL National Directorate headed by Oscar Ramirez Durand, aka Feliciano, met in this house. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 13 Apr 94 p 12)

At least 10 SL "terrorists" died and six were arrested during two clashes with Army forces in Upper Huallaga townships on 8 March and 12 April. An undetermined number of SL "terrorists" died during a clash with police in Palca, 120 km from Huancayo. On 9 April, police personnel raided a clandestine mine that provided dynamite to MRTA. (Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 13 Apr 94 p A12)

SL "terrorists" shot dead three people in the township of Sonomoro, in the jungle zone of Junin Department, on charges of being informants for security forces. (Madrid EFE in Spanish 2237 GMT 17 Apr 94)

On 16 April, Red Path members killed at least 18 people in Monterrico and Chiriari villages, in the jungle district of Mazamrai. Most of the victims were Ashaninka Indians. (Madrid EFE in Spanish 1619 GMT 18 Apr 94)

MRTA "terrorists" on 21 April killed 12 people, including two Army soldiers and nine civilians, and wounded two soldiers and 14 peasants during an ambush of a civilian vehicle in a jungle area of Oxapampa District, Pasco Department. (Madrid EFE in Spanish 0039 GMT 23 Apr 94)

Uruguay

Failure of Constitutional Reform Analyzed

PY2504202194 Montevideo EL OBSERVADOR ECONOMICO in Spanish 18 Apr 94 p 2

[Editorial:"The Constitutional Reform Rests in Peace]

[Text] Having failed to muster 21 votes in the Senate—as required under Paragraph D, Article 331 of the Constitution—the Constitutional Reform Bill submitted by the so-called Group of Five (Radical Batlleism, the MNR [National Rocha Movement], the PGP [Party of the Government by the People], the MRV [Renewal and Victory Movement], and the Herreraist Sector) will rest in peace unless the signatures of 10 percent of the electorate are collected or a proposal by two-fifths of the full membership of the General Assembly is approved, in which case said proposal will be submitted to a plebiscite at the forthcoming elections.

This seems to be the end (unless there is an unexpected turn of events) of an attempt to reform the Constitution, which, at the end of last year and after many changes, had received the support of all the political spectrum. At that time a poorly supported proposal seemed to be struggling toward a reform of the electoral system and relations between the three branches of government. When electoral interests later began to take precedence over everything else—the reform should have been ready for the forthcoming November elections—a stalemate was reached. This logical and predictable state of affairs culminated in the aforementioned vote on 14 April.

In all likelihood we will have no constitutional reform unless either of the mechanisms mentioned above are implemented, or some sectorial interest obtains constitutional protection (as was the case with old-age pensioners in 1989). We are not very concerned about this since we have already voiced our skepticism in previous editorials about the timeliness of such reform (it was obvious that citizens were a little carried away by this initiative, moreover it was too close to the elections for it to materialize) and its purpose (to modifying the electoral system) lost importance as new sectors became involved. What seemed to be an important reform of the system of proportional representation and greater freedom for voters became merely a set of limited proposals that sought to reform practically nothing of substance within the Constitution.

It is obvious that we need a true constitutional reform to eliminate many of the superfluous or harmful articles and chapters of our Magna Carta. For the time being, we should trim the excess fat off the Constitution, reducing it to no more than 150 articles. A concise part describing the principles of our system of government and the inalienable rights of individuals, with another part establishing the organization of the branches of government and their interrelation would suffice for our Constitution. There are too many provisions granting rights which nobody can claim in court (right to health, to a

decent home, etc.), which results from a way of thinking that deemed that the law could allegedly confer happiness and prosperity on all the inhabitants of the Republic.

All provisions pertaining to autonomous bodies and government-owned enterprises are also unnecessary in the Constitution, as they should be regulated by law. The same holds true for the provisions that deal with elections, which are totally out of place in a constitutional text. A concise, concrete, and terse Constitution is the best guarantee of citizens' rights and of the proper functioning of our institutions.

And yet, we must not become obsessed with the idea that amending the Constitution and the electoral system is of paramount importance because it would be of no avail unless a matching change occurs in the behavior of political leaders. We need only look at the recent elections in Italy—following the change in the electoral system, when a total reorganization of political parties ensued. The vices that this change sought to weed out continue unabated and the task of forming a government is today as elusive as it was in the past, if not more so. Constitutions are not valid substitutes for leaders who serve their country rather than their party interests.

This constitutional reform rests in peace. Our country continues to await a true reform. A change in its rulers and citizens' mentality and behavior is even more necessary. Or, as Walt Whitman [1819-1892] said, we need people like those who wrote the U.S. Constitution, as they could make any constitution work. In other words, texts are less important than the people who translate them into reality.

Venezuela

'Text' of Law Establishing Tax on Bank Debits

PA2404043994 Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 21 Apr 94 pg I-15

[Subparagraph lettering as published]

[Text] The Council of Ministers approved on 20 April the first three new laws contemplated under the Special Powers Act.

Central Information Office (OCI) Director Guillermo Alvarez Bajares made the announcement at the conclusion of the Council meeting, saying that reforms to the law on bids for public projects and services, the budget law, and the law on taxes on bank debits had been approved.

Regarding the law on taxes on bank debits, Alvarez Bajares said the tax will be charged only to those who issue checks or other documents against their assets held at any of the country's financial institutions; in other words, the person who receives the check will not have to pay a tax.

The OCI director added that the tax collection system will be quite simple since all financial institutions already have their own control procedures in place to allow rapid supervision of the taxes collected.

The tax on bank debits will be implemented on 2 May through 31 December. The government estimates that it will collect approximately 100 million bolivares during that time. Likewise, the 0.75 percent tax will be levied on all Caracas Stock Exchange operations with the understanding that only the first check of each operation will be taxed.

The other two laws approved by the Council of Ministers include reforms to the budget law and the law regulating bids for public projects and services, which will go into effect once published in the official gazette.

Following is the full text of the decree-law establishing the bank debit tax on accounts at the country's financial institutions.

Rafael Caldera, president of the Republic

In full use of the powers conferred by Paragraph 8, Article 190 of the Constitution, and in accordance with what is established in No. 4, Article 1 of the Basic Law authorizing the president of the Republic to adopt extraordinary measures related to economic and financial issues during the Council of Ministers;

Mandates with rank and force of law:

Decree Establishing a Tax on Debits to Accounts Held With Financial Institutions

Article 1. A tax is hereby levied on all individuals, legal entities, communities, societies, or corporations which, as a result of being account holders, authorize fund withdrawals or other debits from their respective checking or savings accounts, deposits in custody as liquid assets, or any other type of demand deposits, fiduciary funds, or other financial market assets. The tax will apply to the issuance of cashiers checks or any other type of operation by any financial institution regulated by the General Banking and Financial Law, by the National System of Savings and Loan Law, by the Central Bank Law, and by the other special laws regulating banks and credit institutions.

The general rate of this tax shall be zero point seventy-five percent (0.75 percent).

Article 2. The tax base is configured and therefore stems from the obligation to pay the tax when a debit or withdrawal from any of the accounts, deposits, or funds referred to in the preceding article is made or when a cashier's check is issued.

Article 3. The payment or liquidation made by financial institutions on behalf of third parties regarding credit, rights, or assets represents the tax base, provided such payments have not been made to the beneficiary in checking or savings accounts or in cash deposits.

Article 4. The obligation to pay the tax will prevail even if the recording of the debit entails the cancellation of the corresponding account, in which case such cancellation can be made only after the corresponding tax is paid.

Article 5. Financial investments of any kind can be made only by way of debits from the accounts or deposits of the investment holder.

Proceeds from the sale, transfer, or renewal of financial investments referred to in this article, as well as of assets involving loans granted by financial institutions, must be paid exclusively to the beneficiary with a nonendorsable check or credited to his account.

Article 6. The taxable income will consist of the gross debit or taxable transaction prior to the deduction of commissions or expenses, regardless of their nature.

The taxable income of transactions carried out by the stock exchange will be made up exclusively of security shares [titulos valores] offered to the public and issued in accordance with the Law on Market Capitals, Basic Law on Public Credit, and Basic Law of the Central Bank of Venezuela, as the case may be.

Article 7. Stock markets and stockbrokers, in keeping with controls imposed by this decree, must keep special files on all transactions made by investors.

Article 8. The responsible institutions must register as a debit the tax produced [impuesto causado] by virtue of this decree. They will transfer it to a National Treasury account that will be opened at the Central Bank of Venezuela on the first banking day following the day when a debit is made to the taxpayer's account through forms that tax authorities will edit or authorize for this purpose.

Article 9. Financial institutions are responsible for the obligations imposed by this decree. Thus, such institutions must pay the taxes that taxpayers fail to pay in any taxable transaction for which they serve as intermediary.

Article 10. For the purpose of this decree only, the holders of accounts, deposits, funds, and other assets specified in Article 1 must pay the taxes established by it for the endorsement or transfer of checks or securities that are representative of taxable operations starting with the second endorsement or transfer, inclusive. Taxpayers may indicate "nonendorsable" or "endorsable only once" on the reverse of securities.

In the case of transactions made through the stock market, the tax will be applied only to the first purchase for the corresponding title.

Article 11. The following will be exempt from payment of this tax:
a) The Republic, states, municipalities, Central Bank of Venezuela, Venezuelan Investment Fund, National Savings and Loans Bank, autonomous institutions, education institutions duly registered and authorized by the Education Ministry, and public and private universities.
b) Debits that result from cash reserve accounts held in the Central Bank of Venezuela.
c) Transactions between the National Savings and Loans Bank and savings and loans organizations.
d) Transactions between the Central Bank of Venezuela and Venezuelan Petroleum Corporation and its affiliates.
e) Debits to accounts caused by the payment of the tax established in this decree.
f) Debits on checking or savings accounts, ready cash funds, and other cash deposit accounts that are accredited indistinctly to an account of the same nature, to the same account holders, and at the same financial institutions.

This exemption does not apply to accounts that are transferable, either jointly or separately, by individuals and established by more than two account holders. It is also not applicable to any account transferable by more than one legal entity.
i) The issuance of cashiers checks to be applied to an operation that has generated and paid the tax established in this decree.
i) Transactions carried out on the interbanking market that have terms of less than five consecutive days.

Article 12. The tax administration will dictate the required norms and procedures and impart the administrative instructions necessary to implement, collect, control, inspect, and prompt compliance with the tax established in this decree.

This exemption is not applicable to consulates and honorary consuls.
h) Debits corresponding to entries and corrections [asientos y reversos] due to material errors or annulment of operations previously accredited to the account.
g) Debits on checking accounts of diplomatic or consular missions, international organization representations, and their foreign officials accredited in Venezuela.

Article 13. This decree will go into effect on 2 May 1994 and will remain in effect until 31 December 1994.

Issued in Caracas on 20 April 1994
184th Year of Independence and 135th Year of the Federation.
Rafael Caldera
Approved